

Rup Narayan Sinha

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From : Nagarjunakonda, 2nd Century A.D.
Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

RUP NARAYAN SINHA

Suryakala Thapa



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Preface

If literature is a term that cannot be applied to writings or poems that reel off tales that are false—then we can safely say that Rup Narayan Sinha was literature in the truest sense. Whatever little he has written, has emerged not from his egoistic fancies but from the truth and reality of life.

I have ventured to assess the correctness of calling Rup Sinha as a Maker of Nepali Literature, by contacting several of his contemporaries. This work was started as far back as 1980 with full optimism and hope but the spark of enthusiasm was temporarily extinguished due to some misconceptions that I developed from some letters turning their back to my attempt, some crude remarks by well known writers seeking remuneration for supplying information and also due to some of my other engagements. Thus, at first I could not complete this work within the stipulated time.

However it is refreshing to note that I received another request from the Akademi to send the manuscript, and some of the finest Nepali writers including, our renowned Nepali historian Shri Surya Bikram Gewali, and many co-operative gentlemen of Nepali, Bengali, Bhutia and Lepcha community replied not only to my letters and questionnaires but encouraged me to bring out the book by giving their authentic and valuable opinion regarding Rup Sinha.

This work would not have become possible if such good people including the wives and relatives of Rup Sinha, would not have taken their interest in this subject matter.

I express my sincere gratitude to all these persons, including Miss Clara Coutinho, who have helped me in my effort to present this work on Rup Sinha to the interested readers.

S. THAPA

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Chapter I

The End of a Beginning

Darjeeling, the 27th of January, 1955. The place was Chowrasta near the famous Mall, Stephen Mansions Buildings—the present day Ajit Mansion—where a large number of people had assembled to pay their homage to the departed soul of Shri Rup Narayan Sinha, who had suddenly breathed his last on 26th January at 4.30 p.m., when the nation was busy celebrating Republic Day.

The ground floor of Ajit Mansion was crowded with relatives and other people. Their faces bore marks of sadness. Amongst them, a tall, wheat-complexioned, old person—father of Rup Sinha was also to be seen. Death knows no age. He was extraordinarily calm and lonely amongst the crowd. His misery and helplessness, his loss and bereavement had left him bereft of words but he looked quite controlled. Though he had lost his most illustrious eldest son, there was no groaning.

People of all types, from different sections of society had come to pay their last homage to this great soul of the Nepalese. Working people, students, literary people, social workers, businessmen, all had come.

Rup's death was the talk of every house in Darjeeling. He was the Vice Chairman of the Darjeeling Municipality, he was a successful lawyer, a leading social figure and a renowned literary personality. As he had died so suddenly—rumours spread throughout the town. Amongst all these, the truth was that Rup was physically dead now.

The mourning procession, moved gradually towards the bazaar and to the burial place. It was winter in Darjeeling and the weather, though cold, was bright with sunshine. The flower-decked cortege was followed by a large silent crowd. There was a strange hush and people were talking in whispers—about his death. There was a group of young boys also. One of them

had taken off his cap and was walking just behind the hearse, His friends, whose curiosity was roused, asked him 'Hey! Why are you not donning your cap?' The boy solemnly replied—"Today is the only day and the last day to walk with Rup Sinha. I am walking bareheaded just behind him, so that all his intelligence, his powers and his abilities might come directly to me." His friends laughed at his remarks. This boy later became DIG, Assam and was assassinated by extremists while on duty. He was our late Lal Bahadur Sewa.

This incident may be treated as a trifling one, but this proves Mr. Sinha's charisma and shows how famous he was among the young people of Darjeeling. With the exception of a few of his habits, he was the idol of all communities in Darjeeling. Very few criticised him openly but many admired him and his qualities; his ability as a writer, lawyer and as an administrator. Some were even afraid of him because he was outspoken and straightforward. He was quick witted and very few excelled him in this quality. He had a strong personality. His intelligence, his humaneness, his ability to convince others, his powers of speech made many look upon him with awe and reverence.

In fact he was a hero of his time. A Bengalee gentleman speaking at his condolence meeting held at Gorkha Dukha Niwarak Sammelan spoke of him like this—"Rup was a Rajkumar. He lived like a prince and died like a prince." There may be a touch of sarcasm in this statement, but it was also true that he was a person who was always looked upto by the people. Even today there is hardly any one in Darjeeling in any community who can come to the same level of intellectual strength as Rup Narayan Sinha.

Such was a great person with so many varied abilities, who died only after a short ailment of two days. People had doubts about his illness but nobody could doubt the truth that he was overcome by 'Death'.

Death is another truth after birth. But there are some people who we go on loving even after death. Rup Sinha is one such person—he will continue to live in the memories of many who admired and respected him.

An intelligent student Rup had earned his reputation as an intellectual right from his school days. As a young man he was interested in social and literary work. He practised what

he preached. As a lawyer he rose to fame within a very short time. Very few dared to challenge him in his oratory and dialectical strength. He was also a lover of language and literature and took deep interest in the beauty and strength of language. His writings though very few, speak of his talent as a literary genius. He had enough intelligence and foresight to realize that it was necessary to bring about certain changes in the society—and that this could only be done through the media of the language and literature of the region. As Vice-Chairman of the Darjeeling Municipality he earned a lot of fame in running the administration in an efficient way.

Politics also featured among his varied interests and he was ahead of many politicians of his time in thinking of the future administration of Darjeeling District. This bothered critics, and people often referred his personal character and some of his habits. These were but natural and human weaknesses that did not eclipse the fact that he was a talented man. Many of his shortcomings were easily forgotten, when his overall personality was considered. We can proudly say that Rup Narayan Sinha was a genius of his time.

Chapter II

Early Life and Different Activities

Rup was born in an orthodox family in the year 1904 on Friday, February the 10th, at Sepaidhura—a small village on the way from Darjeeling to Kurseong. The name of the house where he was born is called 'Hemabir Cottage'—a name that combines the name of his parents, Hemawati and Bir Bahadur.

Shri Bir Bahadur Sinha, father of Rup, was a man of strong personality and a strict disciplinarian. At home he was a supporter of traditional, cultural Hindu heritage and expected every member of his family to abide by his rules as far as possible. As a Police Officer he was efficient in his work. He was religious minded and expected his family members to be regulated by these religious norms. In fact he wanted religion to be a system of his life. He took a lot of interest in the welfare and well-being of his family members. He was respected, feared as well as very much loved by all.

Hemawati and Bir Bahadur had five daughters and three sons. The youngest daughter Chandrawati, looks after the old paternal home at Sepaidhura—though in between she goes to Shillong, Delhi and other places.

Rup was the eldest amongst the three brothers. The other two were in the Indian Army.

Rup was married thrice. He married his first wife Khiroda in the year 1928. She was the pretty daughter of Shri Agamsingh Giri who had participated in the war of Indian Independence as a staunch Congressman. Though Khiroda was beautiful to look at, she was not very educated.

However, after a few years he found that they were incompatible and thus sought separation. They had three daughters by then—Nella, Beena and Geeta. Later these daughters were looked after by Rup's second wife, Lucy, who was not only beautiful but also gracious. She was a trained nurse and belonged to the prominent Tibetan Laden La family

of Darjeeling. He had a daughter Reenee from her. However, while still an infant an attack of polio left Reena crippled for life. After spending seventeen years together Lucy and Rup decided to separate.

Rup loved to dress up smartly. He was also a connoisseur of good food. Charming, lovable and extremely witty he would be up early in the morning, clean and tidy. Rup was a voracious reader of English literature. He loved Bengalee and Hindi books too.

The third phase of Rup's married life began when he married Saraswati Roka, also a nurse. To them, a baby girl Manju was born in 1953.

Rup was now residing in Ajit Mansion. It was in this house that Rup wrote most of his literary works and held literary meetings. He used to be seen writing in the early hours of the morning, when everybody was fast asleep. He was a man of promptness and precision. He hated delay of any kind. Once he was sure what he intended to do, he never made an excuse of any sort. This promptness characterised all his activities.

Rup started his schooling at St. Mary's. He then attended St. Alphonsus School, Kurseong and later came to Darjeeling Govt. School from where he finished his matriculation in the year 1924. He got distinction in English which was not only an honour for him but for the whole of Darjeeling. He was considered to be a young man with a bright future. It is said that Rup used to write articles in English even during his student days but it is yet to be ascertained whether they were published.

He was greatly admired by his teachers for his intelligence. His headmaster, Achuta Nanda Adhikari often said that Rup could compete even with students of the graduate level. Rup developed a strong love of language at an early age. He loved debates and discussions, reciting poems and dramatics. He actively took part in plays at school functions. He also read avidly and widely.

Rup studied in Scottish Church College in Calcutta and later shifted to St. Xaviers, from where he graduated in 1928. His command over the English language was admired by the college authorities and he used to get a special stipend of Rs. 5/- each month for being 'very good' in the English. There were very few literate people in the Nepali society at that time and to become

a graduate was not only an honour but a great achievement in those days. When Rup came to Darjeeling as a bright young graduate he was given a hearty welcome by all.

In 1928 Rup took a temporary post as a teacher in the Govt. High School, Darjeeling. Though he taught for only four or five months he proved that he had also the qualities of a good teacher for he soon won the love and respect of his students. His favourite subjects were English and Nepali. Though he did not like the teaching profession as such, he was a successful teacher. Rup went to Calcutta again to study law and came back to Darjeeling after having successfully completing his course around 1931-32 and started his career in Darjeeling under Bhuwan Mohan Chatterjee. Soon he started his independent career. Later the two famous Nepali lawyers Ram Krishna Sharma, present Hon'ble Judge of the High Court and Ganesh Lal Subba, worked with him as apprentices for some time.

As a student in Calcutta, Rup became an active member of the Hill Student Association and participated in all types of social work. It was at this time that the famous "Rajkumari Case" had taken place in Calcutta, involving Kharag Bahadur Bist who killed a businessman named Hira Lal because he had kept a Nepali lady forcibly for immoral purposes. Rup started collecting funds for fighting his case, along with other students. A new wave to save women falling into the hands of immoral persons had swept the young people at that time and Rup was one of them. In fact many young boys became interested in 'Patit Udhar'—the upliftment of womenfolk who were being exploited by immoral and anti-social elements.

Rup had a compact library of his own with a fine collection of books, mainly English novels, short stories and books on psychology. This collection was later shifted to Sepaidhura after his death.

However many of his valuable manuscripts, files and books are untraced. It has been reported that Rup had even written three more chapters to his second novel *Bijuli*. One chapter was written in blue ink and the other two in his favourite colour green. But all these are still untraced.

Rup started his profession with brilliant success. He soon became a successful lawyer. He was unique and exceptionally good in criminal cases. Though his qualifications were only simple B.A., B.L., he was able to compete with the best

barristers of Calcutta. He showed an extraordinary talent in legal matters. The late Robi Roy, District Judge, used to tell his friends that he could pardon all of Rup Narayan Sinha's weaknesses, the pleader of Darjeeling, when he hears his English disposition in conducting cases.

Rup was the most sought after criminal lawyer. Interesting anecdotes are still remembered by many of his contemporaries regarding his wit and wisdom during the legal arguments in the court. He used to stun his opponents by his prompt, spontaneous and ready answers and questions. His brilliant arguments always defeated his opponents.

Though he was so good in his profession he never took it seriously. Often he used to lose his papers and brief case. Once he found his brief case at the last moment. He went through it while on his way to Court inside the car and won the case on the same day. "Law was not his vocation but only his profession. He achieved success in his profession but did not bother to accumulate legal erudition. He was content with what legal knowledge he gathered and did not feel inclined to be bookish," was what his colleagues have to say.

There are many unrecorded remarks of Rup that left his opponents dumbfounded. While fighting an election once, the late Damber Singh Gurung, the veteran leader of the Gorkha League, was his opponent. In his election lectures Rup said that though Gurung had the same qualification as he had, he had never heard him pleading for even killing a hen, whereas he himself had so many opportunities to plead for murder cases.

One of Rup's rivals in the court cases at that time was T. K. Pandit. He used to plead the cases of Nepalese also. Once it is said that he used the term 'Namlo' in his argument. Rup quickly retorted that if he was so conversant with the Nepali language could he make out the difference between 'Namlo, Damlo and Nanglo'. It was but natural that this Bengalee gentleman could not reply to his arguments and was left speechless by the shrewd argument of Rup Sinha.

It is also reported that once in the court the same Bengalee pleader humiliated the Nepali language by calling it a 'Coolie' language. Rup rose to the occasion and said that he accepted that this language is spoken by the coolies but this is also a language spoken by a sovereign king in a sovereign country. The Bengalee gentleman had to bow down to the arguments

of Rup. He was a lover of his mother tongue and took great pride in it. His writings have proved that Nepali is as beautiful as any other language in the world.

Rup was excellent in picking up points and was brief in presenting the conclusions. He never took too much time to study his cases or in presenting the same. Darjeeling was, indeed, fortunate to have a lawyer like him. He was a great orator both in Nepali and in English. He was always brilliantly brief and forceful in his comments. Those who were offended by his retorts sometimes used to protest and to this his curt remark was — 'If that hat fits you, wear it.' He was a gifted lawyer. His love of language and books made him more sharp in using appropriate phrases and words which charmed even his opponents.

He used to go to Jalpaiguri, Calcutta and other places for court cases. Within a few years he became famous. While on his way to Darjeeling sometimes he used to drop in at Sepaidhura and ask his sister lovingly 'Cook this fish I have brought from Siliguri.' He was prompt in having his food and soon he was on his way to Darjeeling.

Rup hardly used to spend two hours even during Dussehra festivals at Sepaidhura. He used to give regular financial support to his family, specially to his father. Though he was indifferent to most of his relatives, he was very attached to his younger brother Shum Sher Jung and youngest sister Chandrawati. He loved the good things of life and usually got what he wanted.

Everybody who knew him still regard Rup Sinha as a brilliant lawyer of his time. He used to bring out the best out of the worst. His arguments were always lucid and impressive. He had the rare quality of making something out of nothing, which showed his sharpness and extraordinary inventiveness. He was smart, impressive and whenever the situation demanded he was able to command the respect and attention of everybody.

The famous Nepali historian of our time, Shri Surya Vikram Gewali while highlighting the achievements of Rup as a lawyer writes — "Once I was travelling from Siliguri to Darjeeling in a bus. A Bengalee gentleman was occupying a seat by the side of driver. When the bus stopped, perhaps at Kurseong, a friend of his came and began talking to him. In spite of my trying to take no interest in their conversation I came to learn that the gentleman in the bus was going to Darjeeling to attend a case

in the sessions court. Then his friend asked him about his lawyer, the gentleman on the bus replied — R. N. Sinha. I thought in my mind, a Bengalee client giving preference to a Nepali lawyer, surely proved the ability of Rup Narayan Sinha."

By the time he started his career as a lawyer Rup was already involved with many social organisations of Darjeeling. He was a member of the Gorkha Dukha Niwarak Sammelan, a life member of the Gymkhana Club, the Planters Club, the Monobinod Library, Bhim Chhatra Vritti Kosa, Bar Association, and the Hill Men's Association. He was also the editor of *Khoji* and *Bharati*. In this way he was connected with almost all the social institutions of the town and had started to think about the future of the people of this district.

By this time he had become a well known figure in the District. Under his editorship, the Nepali monthly magazine *Khoji* began to bring to light the glaring shortcomings of the Nepali society and also suggested suitable measures. Rup was of the opinion that unless people are educated, especially the women folk, and unless people's attitude change, society cannot be improved or changed. He wanted to draw the attention of all the Nepalese to these drawbacks and conveyed the same to them through his writings. He was keenly aware of the plight of the Nepalese who were educationally and economically backward and often contemplated on the ways and means to uplift them.

Rup was born at a time when Indian politics was just raising its head to find its identity, independent of British rule. The First World War was in the offing. Rup was still young then. Soon the war was over. The British came out victorious. Indians had the tendency to look to the British as being superior to them in everything, intelligence, manners, way of living and so on. The white-complexioned people commanded respect from every one and everywhere in India. Darjeeling was no exception. This place was particularly favoured by the British, not only because of its natural beauty and charm but because they thought that they could reside atleast peacefully in this region with the peace loving, loyal, sincere, devoted, hardworking and brave Nepali people. People of other origins were almost negligible at that time in Darjeeling. It was natural for young Rup to develop a love for the Britishers and learn their language and etiquette. He modelled himself on British standards and manners and by the time he became a graduate and a respectable

gentleman of Darjeeling town, he encountered no obstacle in becoming a member of the Gymkhana Club which was then meant exclusively for the British Tea Planters and officials. Another Nepali gentleman who had the good fortune of becoming a member of this club was the late Govind Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana of Nepal whose residence 'Maples' has now become a tourist lodge in Darjeeling.

Soon the Second World War also started and as loyal citizens the people of Darjeeling gave widespread support to the British people. Rup as a social worker and editor of *Khoji* did much to make the Nepali people aware of their duties and their responsibilities at such a crucial time.

Be it Nepali or English, Rup was excellent in using the proper word at the proper place. Most of the memorandums submitted to the then Governor and higher authorities used to be drafted by him and as such he had become a close friend of most of the district authorities of that time.

Rup was very straightforward and outspoken. He had understood that the Nepali community was very backward. This irritated him some times, and made him comment most rudely and vehemently at public meetings. His friends and wellwishers had a hard time defending what Rup said in his public speeches. His jibes were hard as marbles. He never lacked the courage to express his convictions.

Dr Parasmani Pradhan, one of the foremost Nepali writers, of Darjeeling and the founder of the first Nepali paper *Chandrika* (1917) and *Bhahati* fondly remembers how as the chief editor of *Bharati*, Rup Narayan Sinha had to be reminded of writing editorials for this paper. The pressman had to go to him and very often he was made to wait. Then and there he would, at one go, finish writing the editorial. He hardly ever sat down hours together for writing anything. However he was often seen amongst books in the early hours of the day writing articles and short stories, after a hectic night at the club.

Rup was quick in helping anyone in need. He was often seen pleading cases without charging any fees.

Almost all those who are interested in the life and works of Rup Sinha know that once he had fallen from a tree near 'Husel Khola' of Kurseong and had been unconscious for some time. His brother Prem was with him. The incident had taken place below the main road, therefore nobody took any notice

of what had happened. Fortunately a bullock cart came by and the 'Khatri Baje' from that cart came down for their help. He was taken in the cart itself. This incident left a great impact in Rup's life-attitude towards the good Samaritan. It is said that Rup never failed to help financially this 'Khatri Baje' as soon as he started earning and for a long time he went on helping him to give education to his children.

Chapter III

As Vice-Chairman of Darjeeling Municipality

As Vice-Chairman of Darjeeling municipality Rup started fighting for the Municipal election since 1941 and he was successfully elected thrice. His ability as an orator and his capacity as an able administrator made him a successful Vice-Chairman. He was elected twice by the house of Commissioners as Vice-Chairman, once in 1948 and again in 1952. Till this time the Municipality of Darjeeling was one of the most well administered municipalities in the whole of India. Darjeeling was really the Queen of Hills. The population was also much less. Rules and regulations were still effective. People had not taken the law into their hands. However, cunning, clever and shrewd people were also there at that time and they never missed a chance of showing him down. Rup was fearless. Had he feared some of his colleagues and had he been more careful he would have saved himself from many a criticism.

He was renowned as a strict and able administrator. Being in the legal profession, nobody could venture to twist their ideas before him. He was sharp and swift enough to detect the slightest twist of words. He hated delay and wanted promptness from all those around him. He used to visit the different wards mostly on horseback and inspect everything around. He often visited the jail also. Everybody was on their toes during his tenure. Only those who could read the mood and manner of Rup, used to go to his chamber. His quick temper was not a bad quality in itself. Through this he only wanted to bring efficiency in the people.

During his Vice-Chairmanship many new innovations were introduced in the Darjeeling Municipality. No houses or shops were allowed to be built over sewers. Rup was very particular about it. Some Tibetan shop-keepers were very angry with him

for this, but he was not afraid. Some even threatened to take him to task but he used to say "Maile pani ghew ko bhutun khaye ko chu" (I have also taken my meals with butter, let me see). Sometimes he used to carry a pistols while going to the market place. He had no intention, however of using it but this was how he used to tackle the situation. He was not afraid of anyone, even of the Bhutias and Tibetans who at one time were famous for the brutal use of their physical strength.

It was Rup's idea to install two searchlights in the Bazaar area, on the top of the Municipality buildings. This light helped many a passer-by at night.

Registration of all the milkmen in the Darjeeling Municipal area was also his idea. It served two purposes: By this he provided a source of income to the Municipality and also ensured the quality of milk supplied within the town.

Unauthorised construction in the town was unheard of during his time. If he saw anything unlawful he took action then and there. His attention was focused on keeping the city clean. He was aware of the social needs and parted willingly the Conservancy Office of Darjeeling Municipality for running the Bhanu Bhakta School. Poet Agam Singh Giri was then Headmaster of this Chanu Bhakta School. Rup was benevolent in many of his activities.

Rup along with Nagar Chand Agarwal introduced the first Darjeeling-Bijanbari ropeway. This ropeway played a significant role in the economic development of the hill areas connecting the neighbouring tea gardens for the transport of their tea products and also daily local goods from Bijanbari to Darjeeling.

Rup also contributed much in starting free and compulsory education in the Municipal area of Darjeeling. Though he could not serve the Municipality for more than a few years but he is still remembered as one of the ablest Vice-Chairmen ever in the Darjeeling Municipality.

Chapter IV

As a Political Figure

One cannot brand Rup as an out and out politician but his interest in politics evolved gradually as he drew closer to society. The year was around 1937. Some of the hill people were now actively participating in the "Quit India Movement" and Rup was busy fighting their cases and obtaining their acquittals. Mahatma Gandhi had already visited this area (1924). Soon elections were held. In 1946 Rup contested for a seat in the Legislative Assembly. His opponent was the late Shri Damber Singh Gurung, veteran leader of the Gorkha League. The people of Darjeeling were for the first time becoming politically conscious. Anti-British demonstrations were being staged. Leaders were being jailed and every home in Darjeeling was vibrant with the feeling of "Gorkhali". Swept away by this sentiment the Gorkha League was successful in uniting the Nepalese scattered all over India under its banner. The League was supporting the Congress but the majority of the uneducated people were only aware of their limited feeling for the Gorkhali. They thought that only the Gorkha League could look after their regional and ethnic necessities. Thus the whole lot of Hill people gave their whole hearted support to D. S. Gurung and not to Rup Sinha who had contested as an independent candidate. He accepted his defeat gracefully. It was natural for him to understand that sentiment played a more important role than reason.

Both these leaders with a handful of intellectuals had understood that the Nepalese must unite under a strong political banner to become aware of their rights and responsibilities. Though the credit goes to D. S. Gurung for this unification under the Gorkha banner we cannot condemn Rup for standing against him. Through his works and writings it was Rup who tried forever to fulfil what Gurung aimed at. Both of them wanted the upliftment of the Nepalese people. both shared a

common view regarding many important issues of the day but it is regretable that these two giants could not come together and work unitedly for the welfare of the Hill people.

Rup had anticipated the future administrative problems of the Darjeeling district. On the eve of the partition of India, Rup played an important role. Around the year 1942 the Governor of Bengal was Sir R. C. Casey, who was an Australian. Rup formulated a plan, which along with some of the prominent tea planters of the hills as well as some important hill leaders, opened a dialogue with the Governor to keep the hill area of the District of Darjeeling as a separate administrative unit not under the State of Bengal when partitioned. Unfortunately his move failed to meet the popular feelings and sentiments of the hill areas. Rup was instrumental in making the draft of this proposal which was forwarded to the Governor of the then undivided Bengal—Lord Casey. This proposal was doomed to failure because of the opposition of Damber Singh Gurung who even went to the extent of accusing Rup of trying to sell Darjeeling to the British people and tea planters. These political leaders have most of the time thought of only their own gain—how to keep their position and power intact. The thought of the welfare and future of the common public have always remained in the background. People were already anti-British and to keep Darjeeling in their hands, even though temporarily, was not understood by the people at that time and now after about forty years some are still clamouring for a separate State.

The idea of "Uttarakhand Pradesh" was also Rup's idea because he realised long ago the administrative complications of this hill district. Some important members of the Gorkha League like Randhir Subba had also strongly supported this issue. Rup also had wanted to become the Secretary of the Gorkha League but somehow he could not directly involve himself with the League. He sometimes used to contribute articles to *Gorkha*, the monthly magazine of the Gorkha League party. It is said that later he became the member of the G.L. and under his presidentship a political meeting on "Uttarakhand Pradesh" was held. In its second meeting he spoke thus: "Let the authorities fight in Calcutta among themselves. It is not going to give us any profit in any way. The way injustice is growing—if it goes on like this, then we will one day even

lose our relationship. The Government is trying to divide us by tearing us apart saying that you are a Lepcha, you are a Bhutia, or you are a Nepali. This is going to be very harmful. The Government needs us. At present 51,000 Gorkha soldiers are fighting and sacrificing their limbs fighting in the snow-capped hills of Kashmir and down in Hyderabad for the Indian Government. Do not think that Hyderabad is won by Chowdhury Saheb—the winners are the Gorkha soldiers. The Government must take care of these Gorkhas—the northern border of India must be strong, the people of this area must be kept happy. The Indian Government must at once frame this “Uttarakhand Pradesh”.

Rup's dream of a separate hill state did not materialise. This idea of a separate administrative hill district within the Bengal had however been supported by the then M.P., Biren Banerjee and Sankher Prasad Mishra.

Rup's speeches were always very impressive. People used to listen to the election campaign lectures of these veteran leaders. Both Rup and Gurung were able speakers, capable of holding the interest of the public. Once a Gurung passed a disparaging remark about Rup saying that he resided in a pigeon hole in this town. Prompt came Rup's reply, “I agree that I live in a small house in this town but please go to the jungle of Kalimpong and there you will find a castle built not by Mr. Gurung but by his forefathers. It is in this jungle that he resides with a flock of sheep.” (The Gurungs are famous for rearing sheep).

It is said that neither he could make himself understood by the masses nor could the masses understand him and his political ideas, which were quite ahead of the time. In his political life he never boasted by giving false promises. He wanted the people to rise to the occasion and not remain idle and useless.

Chapter V

As Editor of 'Khoji'

Rup had a literary bent of mind from his early childhood. When he started his career as a lawyer he had felt deeply the need for social reform. He thought that a magazine would be the best vehicle to express the sentiments of the hill folk as well as give them a direction. The Gorkha Dukha Niwarak Sammelan was established in 1934 and Rup was one of its founder members. He started not only giving legal advice to its members but also took the initiative in publishing a monthly magazine called *Khoji*, which started to work according to the meaning of the name given, in pointing out the evils of the Nepali society. By that time Rup was involved in many other social and political activities and as he could not give much time to this paper, it survived a little more than a year (1940-41). The editorials of this paper, though short, reflect Rup's philosophy of life and literature. Many people came to know about Rup's literary talent only through this paper. He was admired and recognised for his ability to write and express himself in such a lucid manner. It was because of his literary genius that Paras Mani Pradhan, later requested him to be the chief editor of *Bharati* (1950-1955). Rup successfully edited this paper and *Bharati* gained much of its popularity owing to his writings. Going through the editorials one can easily see his concern for Nepali society and its upliftment.

Khoji became a popular magazine among the then Nepali literary people. Even illiterates started to take interest in listening to what was printed in *Khoji*. It opened their eyes towards the evils prevailing in Nepalese society. It is said that Rup had a brigade of volunteers who used to keep a check on the Nepali people, specially the womenfolk and persuaded them to refrain from going to the cinema, for copying film stars had become a blind fashion among the Nepali people. The women folk were especially drawn to the glamour of the cinema.

Many unscrupulous people had already started exploiting this weakness among young Nepali girls.

This craze towards cinema is very well depicted in Rup's 'Dhanmati ko Cinema Swapna'. It was first published in *Khoji* in three instalments. It is one of the best Nepali story ever written. It is the story of a simple girl Dhanmati. Her only wish in life was to be a film star. This takes her to Calcutta, a very far away place in those days. The story ends when she comes back to Darjeeling after remaining there for some time as the fifth wife of "Bade Miya"—who had taken her to Calcutta by telling many alluring lies about cinema and Calcutta. Bade Miya had promised her that he would lift her to the level of Nasim and Jauhar.

As the plot was taken from a real life situation this story captured the minds of the readers immediately, so much so that they even went to the place where Dhanmati, the heroine of the story, supposedly resided. At the end of the story he writes "...Dhanmati has now come back and is staying on the way leading to the Public Hall. Like before she cuts simple jokes with her customers by nodding her head and shaking her earrings. Dhanmati's mother is also seen, always smiling, with spirals of smoke around her. The only additional thing that can be noticed is a grand-child on her lap. Dhanmati's lifelong cherished desire is also to make her daughter a famous cine actress."

One of the readers of *Khoji* observes—"After reading the story of Dhanmati I went towards the Public Hall immediately to see Dhanmati but I could not meet her. She had left the liquor shop. Her mother was however there with her grand daughter on her lap, and she was smoking. The grand-mother's wish was also to make her grand child a cinema actress. If our mothers and grand-mothers dream of making their daughters and grand-daughters, cinema actresses in this way, then after fifteen or twenty years, would not the entire film industry be dominated by Nepali actresses?"

This may be the way the menfolk reacted by trying to have a glimpse of Dhanmati. A lady from Kalimpong writes to the Editor—"The first thing you have found out after *Khoji* is Dhanmati. Who is there in Darjeeling who does not know Dhanmati? You have done a marvellous job by attracting the minds of the society towards Dhanmati. I wonder when Dhanmati's

dream will be over."

Rup's narration of the truth and the reaction of his readers prove that Rup was a successful story-teller. Readers enjoyed thoroughly what he wrote.

The first issue of *Khoji* came out in the year 1940 in the month of September. In the editorial Rup wrote—"We are prepared to 'Search'. We know nothing. Literature is like a deep ocean for us. We are not aware of Science and our knowledge of Arts is very poor. In short, we are not able to understand even the outline of world history. Culture and civilization are far away from our doorstep. But even in this pitiable condition we have ventured to know who we are? Where we are? Why we are in this condition? And what will be our future? These strange questions often come up in our minds, like lightning in the dark heavy clouds in the sky.... Ideas like this have pushed us forward to publish *Khoji*. We will try our best to carry on this 'search' according to our knowledge and wisdom. We request intellectuals and those who are serving the cause of language to help us in this search... There is nothing in this world which cannot be obtained by searching."

Though Rup could not get the desired co-operation from the intellectuals, he got the support and sympathy of the poorer sections of the society. Some even criticised why an institution like G.D.N.S. which was meant for relieving the plight of the society, as the name suggests, was entering into the domain of literature and trying to uplift the mother tongue and women of this society?

Rup was aware that whenever any search is made, confrontation and obstacles are bound to come in the way. He wrote "Each one has got equal rights in this world. The benefits of industry, all the products of the earth...must be divided equally among all—this is our birth right". When the Second World War was over Rup came forward commenting on the qualities of the English people. He wrote: "Hitler swallowed each of the nine countries like a snake swallowing frogs. Even a country as strong as France was defeated. The world was fear shaken except the little island where stout and brave people reside. The Europeans call them "Bull dogs"—the type of dogs which once it bites does not leave its prey till death comes. The world knows these people as Englishmen. They say to Hitler, "Look

brother! Do not use your tactics of strength and might. All the nations of the world have the right to stay and live independently. If there is any misunderstanding let five of us sit together and find solutions. You return all the lands that you have conquered." Hitler replies, "What interest do you have in this? You are rich, your empire is extended all over the world. You better keep silent."

Rup was aware that the Nepalese could not compete with other nations in wealth and possessions but he was proud of the Nepalese people to have the honour of being brave and loyal to their masters. These simple and hard working people are scattered all over India, nay the whole world. Rup wanted to bring unity among these scattered Nepalese through the media of newspaper and magazines. He thought that some organisation on an All-India basis must be found so that all the Nepalese could come together and meet. He observed: "Our society is divided into many parts on the basis of different castes and creeds. Biswakarma Samaj, Kirat Samaj, Mangar Samaj are seen everywhere. Our India is so big a country that we do not know in which corner these Nepalese reside."

Rup was aware of another national characteristic of the Nepalese people. He wrote, "We know only how to copy others. Go to Burma there we will see we have adopted the Burmese culture, go to Punjab we see the Nepalese in Punjabi dress, go to Bihar we see them speaking Bihari language, go to Banaras we follow the Banarasi customs. Wherever we go we imitate cent percent the culture of that place, forgetting completely the decay of our own Nepali existence."

By propagating education among the masses and especially women folk, Rup wanted to bring changes in the society. He used to say that education is the only means by which we can redeem our helpless mass. We have become so self-centred and limited in our views that at the most we work, look after our family, enjoy ourselves and go to some pilgrimage if we can afford it. This should not be the sole purpose of our life. There are other people also in the society and we must contribute something for their well being because everybody's well being is our well being. This has never been understood by us". He goes on to write, "Just meet any Nepali in Calcutta, be he a darwan or a caretaker, he takes pride in talking in Hindi. There are a few businessmen in Barabazar. They think that they are

Ambalal Sarabhai or Jamnalal Bajaj. If they see any Nepali coming they turn away their heads." By exposing these truths Rup wanted to teach a lesson to the Nepalese to open their eyes towards the society and its social problems.

He wanted all girls to go to school. Teaching and learning only household work does not allow their full personality to grow. We should not make them the slaves of the men folk. If they go to school they can study with their contemporaries. They can play and share with them all their joys and sorrows, and when they get married and bear children they may also be trained and given education by such literate mothers. Rup was of the opinion that by educating the women we will be educating the whole nation. If the nation wants the society to be strong it must give due importance to the education of women.

Rup wanted the Nepalese to contribute their mite to the enrichment of the Indian culture and civilization but because of the poverty and backwardness he knew that his people were helpless. Admiring the qualities of these people Rup used to say "Just look at the health, strength and courage of the Hill people. They cannot afford to partake of even two full meals a day. Delicious food they cannot think of, nor do they have enough clothes to cover themselves in the chilly winter. But they are all growing stronger and at heart they are courageous. Indeed there is no one in a Gorkhali family who is born without courage."

Rup recalls back the history of the brave Nepalese who have fought in the two world wars. He keeps in contact with the higher administrative authorities. Acknowledging the services rendered by Gorkhali soldiers and the improved economy of India due to cheap Nepali labour in the tea gardens, the then Deputy Commissioner, M. M. Stuart, Darjeeling, wrote to Rup Sinha:

Dear Sinha,

I send you a short note for *Khoji*. I am sorry I have not time to give you more.

I am very glad to hear there is to be a special edition of the only Nepali monthly paper in Darjeeling in connection with the war. The services of the Gorkha Regiment are well known and information as regards their movements cannot obviously be given at present. Recruitment has been

very satisfactory and I understand that the Gorkha Regiments have increased more than any other regiments in India in size. The presence of Major Mercer and his assistance in Darjeeling gives us assurance that nothing will be wanting either for the full utilisation of the available material or of the care and attention which will be given to the recruits...

This is at once a rich and poor district. The main crop of the district, i.e. to say, tea, produces more money per acre than any crop in Bengal, but the expenses incurred in making it and selling are not inconsiderable. It is only the local sources that we can tap for subscription to the war and in consideration of the small population, both European and Indian, I do not think that our one and half lakh of rupees is a matter to be ashamed of. There are many collection boxes in tea gardens and Government estates and from each sums of money though small, continue to come in, and demonstrate, of the poorest as well as the richest, a realisation that in this crisis their help is needed for the British and the Indian cause....

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- M. M. Stuart

Mr. Stuart's letter ends here but the history of the people of Darjeeling continues. They are the same old brave and heroic community, seeking the same old profession in the army and tea plantation. Independence has hardly changed anything. Literacy has increased but they are yet to be properly educated. Rup was not satisfied with the existing state of affairs. He wanted to remove poverty and other allied difficulties of the Nepalese.

The Dussehra festival comes and Rup starts telling people through *Khoji*, "Let us not waste money on new clothes. We can still wear the old ones and pay respect to Goddess Durga. Let us pray that until our difficulties are over and poverty is gone, we will not spend anything extra on clothes and food other than what is essential." He wanted the Nepalese to show restraint in their expenditure and save for the welfare of the nation and the society.

Unfortunately, *Khoji* did not last long. We do not know the reason behind the sudden death of this young and promising

magazine. But the public really felt the void created due to the absence of *Khoji* which had actually started to open their eyes to the glaring shortcoming of the society of Darjeeling.

Chapter VI

As Editor of 'Bharati'

India achieved independence, a new surge of freedom had swept over the country. Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated but the nation went on in its march towards progress. The sense of patriotism became more intense after the death of the Father of the Nation. Rup called a meeting at his home in Fern Cottage which was attended by such intellectuals as Parasmani Pradhan, Surya Bikram Gewali, Motichand Pradhan, K. B. Singh and others. This meeting decided to bring out a paper called *Ranko*. Some of the members however did not agree with the name. Therefore it could not come into being. *Bharati* was born later at the instance of Parasmani Pradhan who was for a long time serving the cause of the Nepali language. Rup who was longing to publish a paper, happily agreed to become the Chief Editor of this magazine at his request. Rup was now more mature in his outlook. As editor of *Khoji* he had the intention of bringing into light the miseries and sorrows, and social vices and lack of education in the Nepalese society. Now in *Bharati* he centred his editorials not round the social aspects but more on the literary and linguistic aspect of Nepali society.

As usual we find his editorials in *Bharati* short but very forceful. In the first issue of *Bharati* (1950) he writes, "Nepali Bhasa is a precious jewel of the Nepalese. This language is above the king, kingdom and mother-land Nepal. Without the Nepali language we cannot think of the Nepali kingdom, Nepali nation and Nepali king. It is the duty of every Nepali to do service to this language. It can be compared with any language of the world. It has a very bright and important future because it is a language of the court, of pundits, brave soldiers and of our poor peasant brothers and sisters.

"Today we may not be able to compete with the other state languages of India like Bengali and Gujarati but tomorrow is not far off when Nepali will be counted as one of the major languages of India. We have a firm faith in this..." Nepali is a

beautiful and living language—let us come together and be volunteers of serving this Nepali language, then only it can attain its rightful place among the languages of the world."

Rup warned the Nepali people that they should not make Nepali language their begging bowl. All should work for its development. He was proud that this language has a beauty and charm of its own. He could see clearly that it could compete with any language and through his writings he proved that this was no exaggeration. Quantitatively his writings are not many. But what he has written remain masterpieces.

Criticism, both good and bad, was received by Rup with an open mind. He used to say, "All the sweet and sour criticisms are blessings for us. The only thing we want is further progress of Nepali language and literature". He was aware that whenever any one gives his opinion he is bound to be influenced by his own independent thoughts and memories. He cannot do so without being biased. He cites an example—"When it rains during the rainy season, sometimes it pours throughout the day, a person might say—what a rotten day and another might exclaim how fresh and pleasant the world looks." Such were his ideas and it appears that he never felt jealous and was never angry with those who criticised him.

Rup was fond of the Bengali language right from his school days and later he became proficient in reading Bengali. His love for this language and his bent towards Bengali literature is reflected in his writings. He could read printed Bengali script easily but never liked to read hand written Bengali. Later we will examine how much he was influenced by this language and how he fruitfully used Bengali words in his novels.

He translated a passage of Rabindranath into Nepali and published it in the 5th issue of *Bharati*. It was a welcome poem to 'Sarad' or autumn.

He prays to mother "Sharada" to bless the people with new and enlightened life. He tells her that there is no dearth of brave people among the Nepalese but we want more people who are also good in language and literature."

Giving advice to young writers, he says—"You must pay attention to the construction of language. It is made up of words. Pure Nepali words make up a pure Nepali language. If you do research work and study well, you will find that each of these words is a storehouse of moral and historical truth

not to speak of emotion and imagination. You will discover new things words have a living strength. It is through words that our thoughts get their structure. Search and find how each words has come into use—you will get that education which may not be obtained even after reading hundreds of books. The different languages of the world are at different stages of its development due to a variety of conditions, time and subjective factors. They who have understood that language is a gift of God and started serving it, flourished in every field of life and those who neglected, it, remained backward."

Thus advising the young writers, he taught us how language should be served, and how it can be made beautiful step by step by gradual improvement. He always stressed this point that service to language is just like building ones house. It may be a simple hut in the beginning but later it may be turned into a magnificent building by working together.

Whenever any new magazine or papers was published Rup felt very happy because he knew it was a step towards the uplift of the standard of Nepali literature. He was always encouraging to young writers and asked them to write not only for economic gain but to give it a selfless service. He had understood well that unless people are educated such magazines would not survive. The fittest respect we can give to a language or literature is to give it the widest possible publicity. Our reading habit should not only be developed but it should be kept alive by well-guarded efforts. Publications of papers only will not adorn our literatue. In this respect each one of us should be the patrons of our respective language.

Mentioned earlier Rup welcomed criticism of all kinds. He regarded criticism as essential for progress and development. We have to be very careful while accepting the criticism because it might sometimes lead us to delusion. Critics too have to guard themselves against this. "He has to safeguard himself from 'vanity of condemnation'. He should not criticise anything with a big puffed up ego."

The editorials written by Rup were of a very high standard and he proved that he was good in journalism too. Giving further stress to the importance of language and its related history, he said—"We get all the material and immaterial history of human life, in language. How a barbarian has been turned into a civilised man. All the description of the wonderful changes

that has come to the world can be read and known through language. The whole history of the world can be studied only through language. This is a process—which is going on and will go on for ever.... The world has seen the birth of so many brave men but their memories are forgotten, the beauty of many a women have dazzled the world but their beauty is also gone for ever. Memorials have been constructed, kingdoms have been established but we are not able to see them even in dust particles. But, the poems of Homer, the writings of Valmiki and the words of Shakespeare have become eternal in the pages of literature. It is from this literature that hundreds of writers, scientists, historians, religious priests and politicians have derived inspiration and attained wisdom and future guidance. Language has got this magic strength." Considering all the benefits of language and literature he says to the Nepali people, "Let us start and try to write the history of the Nepali nation, the history of the Nepali language and let us keep our precious heritage...."

Whenever Rup found young people grumbling or criticising as to why they should read old styled writers like Bhanubhakta and Lekhnath, he used to answer, "We have to read them with an outlook of criticism... Imitation is not going to help you to create a style in literature. The essential thing is a regular writing habit. One cannot become a writer by just wielding a pen. Study, practice and effort are the keys to the making of a successful writer (अध्ययन, अभ्यास अनि अध्यवसाय).

Rup was aware that simple poems and stories alone cannot cultivate real literature. To make it full-fledged, articles and books on all aspects—like scientific, objective and historical—must be written and published. He said that the youth must come forward to write on a variety of subjects, poems and stories can be available in plenty but historical essays are rare. He wanted to say that the need for authentic historical writings was very great. It presents the past before us in a living form. Historians do not care whether ideas and faiths are contradictory or whether the truth is loved or hated. History starts from accidents and happenings and it lives for ever on these established facts.

There was no uniformity of spelling and grammar among the Nepali writers of Darjeeling and elsewhere at that time. Grammar books were available but as far as spellings were concerned

writers differed in their opinion and used and spelt words according in their own way. Later, however, a consensus was reached at after a series of meetings in Kathmandu and Darjeeling. Rup was aware of all these difficulties. Some new 'isms' had also came into being to keep Nepali pure and original. But a living language changes and one cannot curb this process of change. Comparing the development of the language with the flow of a river, Rup wrote in *Bharati*—"The progress of language and literature is just like the flow of a river. The river may increase in size but it remains within certain limits. This is how the river brings prosperity to the adjacent lands. But the moment it crosses its limit, it becomes dangerous."

"Therefore we need to develop and improve Nepali language within the limits of accepted grammar—then only the river of Nepali language can enter into the ocean of the world language."

As for the difference between prose and poetry, Rup found no distinction between the two. He felt that any well written prose can give us as much joy and pleasure as poetry. There can be no primary distinction between well composed prose and good rhythmic poetry.

The idea of emancipation of women always attracted Rup. He came across all sorts of women belonging to different strata of the society. Many of them are depicted in his stories and novel. In an article on women, in *Bharati*, he wrote, "If you educate a man you are educating an individual but if you educate a women you are educating a family."

In a backward hill area, where even educated men were rare women's education was preposterous. But Rup held firmly to his beliefs: "It is true that Nepali society is gradually undertaking the importance of women education but some carelessness is seen in this respect. Our intellectuals and teachers are not interested in this subject. It is a misconception that education can be received only in schools and colleges. There is no dearth of time for a housewife to read something while doing household work or teaching the children. Our difficulty is this that our literate women folk never pay attention to open the eyes of our illiterate mothers and sisters."

"The number of literate women in our society is quite few but if they can start working in an organised way, in compact groups, they can surely bring the light of education among the

Nepali families within a very short time."

Rup even brought out a special number on women in *Bharati*. Here all the articles were written by women on women. In the editorial Rup wrote, "Women? Their glory and importance is as wide as the ocean. The world respects the nation and the society which gives due reverence to its women-fólk." It was unfortunate, he felt that the Nepali society was still neglecting its women, hesitating to give them equal or higher place in society. Rup wanted to focus the attention of the whole society towards this aspect and also throw light on the duties and responsibilities of the Nepali women.

Rup recognised the fact that to bring about change in society the people must be educated. Quoting Emerson, he said: "Our chief need in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can. In actual fact, our weaknesses are not due to our inability but because of our carelessness. Each man and woman must develop fully according to his or her own ability, intelligence and speciality. But alas, there are very few who can go on, on their own and do not require any incentive of any kind. The majority are in need of encouragement and very few are broad minded enough to give encouragement to others." He had a firm belief that hard work and discipline would surely take the Nepali people towards the road to development.

Chapter VII

Rup on 'Bhanubhakta'

Through the literary efforts of the Nepali Sahitya Sammelan, poet Bhanubhakta was made known among the Nepalese. Efforts were also being made that Surya Bikram Gewali, renowned Nepali historian, to install his statue at Chowrasta. The intellectuals of Darjeeling were now realising his importance although some criticised him as being old fashioned. But their condemnation could not stand in the way of his popularity. While giving his opinion about Bhanu, Rup said: "there can be no two opinions regarding the position that Bhanu holds in the field of Nepali literature. The position which Chaucer had in the English language can be compared with the position that Bhanu has in Nepali language. Chaucer has beautifully depicted the English life and society in his *Canterbury tales*. The language used by Chaucer, Shakespeare and modern writers are miles apart, but Chaucer is regarded as the one who laid the foundation of the English language.... Similarly we find a lot of difference in the language used by Bhanubhakta and his contemporaries or early writers and the modern Nepali language. But we can never give credit to anybody other than Bhanu for laying the foundation of the language which we speak today. It was he who started the first step towards the progress of modern Nepali."

Rup's articles on Bhanu published in *Bhanu Smarak Granth* under the editorship of Surya Bikram Gewali — 'The jailed poet' (Thunuwa Kavi)—was greatly appreciated by many. Comparing Bhanu Bhakta with Tulsidas and Kritibas — Rup says that all these three writers of Ramayana were Brahmins by caste. All these three have written Ramayana in their respective mother tongue — in Nepali, Hindi and Bengali. But the outstanding difference between these three is that while Kritibas received the favour of the court and the king, Tulsidas and Bhanu were jailed by the rulers. One for not being able

to exhibit extraordinary power of the king and the other for not submitting his accounts. The poetry that flowed from the imagination of these three poets have enriched the entire language and literature of India and thousands of people hold these books as sacred. It is because of these feelings that we still remember Bhanu and offer him our felicitations. Let the seeds shown by Bhanu be a big tree." This is how Rup expresses his ideas about Bhanu and desires the people to work hard to fulfil this aim of making the Nepali language a big tree. Simple, idle expectations are not going to help us to fulfil this desire. What we have to do is to make a promise to work together for its fulfilment.

His approach of the subject matter of 'Bhanu' in *Thunuwa Kavi* shows that Rup had potential as a dramatist too. He imagines that Bhanu is thoughtful inside the jail and his companions are the characters of the great epic Ramayana. He forgot all his troubles and problems and finished 'Ramayana'. Rup quotes an English poet:

Stone walls do not a prison make
Nor iron bars a cage.

and says that no one was able to keep Bhanu within the walls of the jail. His mind was free, so he was able to produce a great book like Ramayana. He writes:

We are the music makers
And we are the dreamers of dreams
Wandering by the lone sea breakers
And sitting by the desolute streams
World losers and world forsakers
On whom the pale moon gleams
Yet we the movers and makers
Of the world for ever it seems.

Yes, we are the makers of our own world. It seems Rup had great faith in the ability and strength of man.

Rup's awareness of shortcomings in his society and his ideas about Nepali culture, language and history shows that deep within him, he wanted to revive the glory of the Nepali people not only in the field of warfare but also in the field of science and arts as well. Brave and loyal they were but unless they can keep abreast with the modern developments they will lag

far behind. He wanted them to be culturally alert, economically well off and educationally advanced. He wanted to prove this by his own example. His life, and a very short one at that, proved not too sufficient to awaken fully the Nepali society but his work, editorials and his writings are there, eternally to guide them forever in the future. He lived like an Englishman, but his mind was always tuned towards the betterment of the Hill people.

Chapter VIII

Three Poems of Rup Sinha

Besides short stories, a few essays and a novel, Rup has also written a few poems. Three of them were published in *Bharati* — “Daridrya ko Sarap” (The Curse of Poverty), “Thyo Din Asahaya” (That Poor Helpless Person) and “Shanta”.

In “Shanta”, Rup analyses beautifully the character of a typical flirtatious woman. Shanta is an extremely beautiful, interesting and cunning young woman. She pretends to be shy but is actually not. She is very careful but appears to be careless. Many men have become victims of her false and fickle love. She makes fun of her lovers. But she does not know that she is only making fun of herself.

We know that there are several such type of women and there are men who run after them. Rup has portrayed this phenomenon in his unique style.

“Thyo den Asahaya” (The poor helpless person), is the story of a poor man who is admonished by a priest. Plague had devastated the whole human existence. At this time he is a poor helpless man, who is hardly able to walk, due to hunger and illness. He decides to go to the temple. It is a big and beautiful one. Fresh fruits and other eatables were all decorated in front of the idol. There were other items of worship too. The man half dead with hunger and thirst enters the temple but he can stand no longer and falls down in such a position that his legs are turned towards the idol. When the priest comes and see this he becomes angry and shouts at him saying that he has insulted God by putting his legs in front of him. The poor man smiles ironically and with folded hands tells him that God is every where, in all directions and he does not know where to keep his feet.

Rup was never particular about following all the rituals of

the Hindu way of worship, though he never objected to it. At home he used to attend all the religious festivals only for a while just because he did not want to hurt the feelings of his father and other relatives. Instead of rituals he was more in favour of serving the poor and the needy. This according to him was the best way of serving religion. This poem reflects his religious ideas and shows how foolish it is to build temples and pay the pundits. Some of his writings show his religious views very clearly. In his story 'Bidwasta Jiwan' the girl asks, — 'Do you believe in God?' — "I cannot say that God exists and I have no proof also to show that God does not exist." "Is there any truth in God's plan, whatever will happen, or is it our Destiny? — "No there is none".

"I believe in God but my faith in him has almost been shattered to pieces. No one can defy destiny."

Rup has an open mind about religion and worship and did not believe in orthodoxy.

"Daridrya Ko Sarap" (The Curse of Poverty) is another poem with similar sentiments. It was published in the sixth issue of *Bharati* in the year 1950. In this poem also he describes the miseries of poverty. The protagonist, a beggar man, who in the end meets another beggar and finds that only he is ready to share with him whatever he has. The gist of the poem may be presented thus — "It was winter and snow was falling. The wind that blew was very cold and no sun was to be seen in the sky. An old beggar was standing in the highway. On the two sides of the road there were high rise buildings where rich and prosperous people lived. They were perhaps all merry making inside their houses. They had enough means to ward off the cold winter. But no one seemed to show any sympathy to the beggar. They treated him like a stray dog. At last he meets another poor man who too was very hungry. He begs before the poor man for alms. The man replies that if he gets anything he will certainly give half of it to him. The old man feels satisfied. His eyes get filled with tears of love and gratitude and he says that at last he has met God himself."

This poem according to some is a translation of 'Silentium Amoris' by Oscar Wilde but Rup's idea about God and man becomes clearer in this poem. He does not believe that God resides only in temples and churches. He is found within the mind of each man. He resides wherever there is love, sympathy,

compassion and charity. So man must serve man if he wants to see God. Just as the old beggar saw God in another helping man, similarly we have to show our goodness in charity and detachment by renouncing selfish luxury and greed. Human life will be less miserable when we share with others what we have. There is goodness in every man but selfishness covers all that is good. Do away with this selfishness and the world will be a place of beauty and harmony, Rup said. The world which Rup lived in was not like what he had envisioned. There was misery and exploitation everywhere. The rich dominated the poor, the stronger had the upper hand over the weak. It seemed as if a sort of conspiracy was always going on to win fame and power. Rup hated it. What he saw he wrote in his poems and stories.

Chapter IX

Letter from Surya Bikram Gewali

After the advent of Dharnidhar Sharma and Surya Bikram Gewali around the year 1920-23 Darjeeling was experiencing a new spate of development in the literary and social field. This hill district gradually started to take a turn towards newer developments. The former gentleman was a teacher by profession and a poet by nature. He was popularly known as Punditji. He was working in Darjeeling Government High School. Later Shri Gewali also joined this school as a teacher in the year 1923. These two personalities left an indelible impression in the minds of the whole public by their deeds and actions. It will not be wrong to say that they were the ones who impressed the budding mind of Rup to become a writer of such wide fame. It will not be out of place to reproduce here excerpts from a letter written by Surya Bikram Gewali to this author.

When I joined Government High School, Darjeeling, as a vernacular teacher on the 23rd July, 1923, Rup Narayan was a student of Class IX or X. Mahananda Sapkota, now dead, was also a student.... being a junior teacher I had not many opportunities of teaching Rup Narayan while at school, yet he held me in esteem as long as he lived, and I was on good terms with him.... after passing his matriculation examination he went to Calcutta for higher studies.... it appears that while in Calcutta he made his acquaintance with the Bengali language and literature. When he began writing Nepali I could definitely find his style of writing Nepali was influenced by Bengali prose. For proof I would ask you to read the articles contributed by him on Bhanubhakta, to the Bhanubhakta Commemoration volume published by the Nepali Sahitya Sammelan. His first novel *Bhramar* also shows this influence.

After discussion and consultation with me he wrote his

first novel *Bhramar*. He was good enough to hand over the manuscript of the novel for necessary stylistic improvement to me. I did my best to improve its language.

He accepted my suggestions for improvement and they were a good many, without objection. He asked me to contribute a preface to the work which I did gladly....

Rup Narayan was also fond of writing short stories in Nepali. I remember in one of our discussions, about the backwardness of Nepalese, I told him an anecdote about how a Brahmin in our hills lost his caste because he helped a woman of an untouchable caste to cross a swollen stream. I remember he told me then and there that he would write a short story about it. Some time later I read the story duly printed in a paper.... published by Gorkha Dukha Nivarak Sammelan. The story mentioned here was also included in a collection of his short stories.

Rup Narayan joined the Nepali Sahitya Sammelan and for years became its publication secretary. I am sure some of the publications of the Sammelan of these days bear his name as their publisher. Afterward when his practice increased and he took to politics he gave up the work.

He was Municipal Commissioner for a long time and he rose to be the Vice-Chairman of the Darjeeling Municipality. I was also a nominated member of the Darjeeling Municipality in those days. He was a successful member of the Municipality and a popular Vice-Chairman.

Rup Narayan liked the western style of living. He was always dressed in Western dress. He was the member of the local Gymkhana Club and he was perhaps a pretty regular visitor. It was believed he used to dance in the club like an Englishman and other Europeans and was perhaps a popular figure in the club. He was fond of good clothes and he was a well dressed person.

He used to buy good English books from local bookshops. I remember having borrowed books from him on modern psychological conclusions by various authors. It shows how keen he was to keep himself abreast with the latest."

Sd/- S. B. Gewali

Well, these are a few extracts from the response that this author received so fortunately from the one of the foremost historians of the Nepali nation. Though quite aged (he was eighty-two when he wrote this letter — 19th July '80), he was alert and enthusiastic to encourage a novice writer. I am grateful that I am able to include so authentic an information regarding Rup Narayan Sinha, only because of his wholehearted and open co-operation — while sending all

these useful informations Shri Gewali has also written the following letter which bears a historical significance concerning the character of the historian himself... He writes, — “the questions arise along with its answers and a note written by me is being sent to you. I feel that all the points that I could remember had been included in it.... Besides when you start writing the book and if any question does arise and if you write to me I will gladly try to remember and send you in writing...

This letter shows how close two literary giants they were to each other. Each one knew and respected the greatness of the other.

The time was such that the Rana regime of Nepal was being criticised by the intelligentsia and a sort of revolution was stirring in Nepal from the early twenties. There was less freedom in Nepal, mainly for the literate ones. A Brahmin youth educated in Benaras instead of staying in Nepal came to Darjeeling and won the hearts of the people by his poems written mainly with a view to change the social outlook of the Nepali people. *Naivedya* and *Spandan* came into being and people started to take interest in literature as well as social reform. Organisations and associations were being found and the eyes of the people were so to say opened towards education and group activities. It was during the British Raj the Nepali people in Darjeeling were busy with wine, women and gambling. They did not see any harm in this but Punditji tried to show them that the purpose of life was different from these frivolities and they must make themselves worthwhile to be called human beings. The joint activities of Punditji and Gewali were not appreciated by the then administration. They were even jailed for security purposes. It was in this Government school that they met Shri Paras Mani Pradhan who was also a teacher there. These three later came to be known as “Su-Dha-Pa” in Nepali literature. How close the relationship was between the three is not known but the service they rendered for Nepali language is well known.

Chapter X

His Novel Bhramar

Rup's first novel *Bhramar* was published in the year 1936 by the Nepali Sahitya Sammelan. The second edition was published in 1950 and the third in 1971. We have seen how he was encouraged by Gewaliji to write this novel. It appears that he was also influenced by Dharnidhar Sharma. The ideas reflected in his poems are similar to the ideas that Rup has written in the form of prose in the editorials of *Khoji* and *Bharati*. Both the poet and Rup wanted to uplift the society through education and literature which can bring the desired changes in the society.

Through *Bhramar* Rup has given us a picture of the Nepali society of India of that time. There are characters belonging to the higher strata of the society of Nepalese who can afford to travel to new places. It also gives us a picture of the lower class Nepalese whose profession in life was centred round agriculture and looking after cattle. There is not a single description which gives some hint about Nepal and its culture. Rather, this novel has got a purely Indian base and it is woven round the localities of Darjeeling, Calcutta, Banaras and Burma.

This novel ushered a new era in the field of Nepali literature. The earlier novels were written in the modern Nepali language and the subject matters varied from the Royal Court to social problems. But so far as the language, the subject matter and presentation was concerned, not a single novel of that time could compete with *Bhramar*. Though the subject matter has changed a lot now, the language used by Rup is still the best, which no one has been able to surpass.

Rup has a style of his own and the words that he has selected to express his feeling are unique. His narration and vision are so clear and vivid that the readers feel at one with the writer in understanding the different characters. The way 'Mota Rai'

speaks and behaves, his mannerisms, his frankness and friendliness give us a good picture of a Nepali who has left his native home and settled outside Darjeeling in search of a new life and livelihood. Just like any other Nepali he loves meeting Nepalese people in places other than Darjeeling. As usual he picks the language of new places quickly and uses it while speaking his mother tongue. The Hindi phrase 'Kia nam' which he uses, has made his character more interesting. His sweating face 'like a red tomato' in the hot climate of Calcutta not only amuses us but gives us an idea of the hill people whose rosy faces grow more red owing to heat in the plains. Usually hill people grow pale after a long stay in the plains but Mota Rai has been able to maintain the redness of his face. His lively character has made the novel very interesting.

The story of the novel centres around four families. The main character of the novel is Shekhar, a young, energetic and educated lad from Darjeeling who goes to Calcutta for higher studies. He is in love with everything that is beautiful. He is intelligent and good looking. He is fond of good clothes and music, loves poetry, literature and art and helps whoever is in need. He has a new outlook towards society and social reform. He is in favour of women's education and wants to uplift the Nepali illiterate folk. Last but not the least he has a weakness for beautiful women. He roams about like a 'Bhramar'—a bee, and tastes the nectar of so many innocent flowers. At last he realises that love is not lust and transforms himself into a worthy person of the society by marrying Bina and starts serving the people by spreading the cause of education. Shekhar does not believe in God or in the religious rituals, which appear artificial to him. He says that 'Love is a weakness of the mind. The world is a playground therefore we have to enjoy our life. Life is a struggle where the stronger always wins. Society is a conspiracy of ruling the weaker section by the stronger.' Later, however, Shekhar changes his earlier view, and becomes aware of the fact that one cannot live apart from society. This society can be changed if people in a group so desires. The story ends with the inauguration of a free school by a donor, who is a non-Nepali living in Calcutta. Shekhar hopes that the children of this place can get better academic and vocational education in this school.

Shekhar has a friend Mohan. He is different from Shekhar

in his ideals and thoughts. He loves simplicity and truthfulness. He is neither proud nor does he hanker after honour and name. He dresses well, loves sports, goes for cultural shows but is far away from luxury and lust. He studies in Benaras. He is a true friend of Shekhar. When Tulsi Baje, the Brahmin priest criticises and gives a bad name to Shekhar he becomes sad and is determined to reform his friend. Later he has a hand in bringing Bina and Shekhar together and he himself marries Maya. If one gets the chance of meeting a friend like Mohan, many a talented Shekhar would be saved from going astray. By helping Shekhar, Mohan has sought the welfare of the whole society.

Many Nepalese have settled in Burma, Assam and in other parts of India. But Rup has given a clear picture of the Nepalese staying in Assam and Burma. They undergo a great deal of hardships in order to make a living. But very few are economically well off. Describing the dense forests of Assam, Rup writes — "There is the fear of the beasts, malaria, kala-jar and of epidemics — many had to run away towards Shillong in search of employment and many had to die because of this hazard."

Rup blames the Nepali people for their backwardness and says that they themselves are responsible for their miserable and deplorable condition. If they want to save themselves, they must give up the idea of taking help from others and learn to stand up on their own feet.

Talking further about the Nepali society Rup says that, "The coolies, the cowherds and the farmers are the makers of Nepali society.... Nepali language is gradually spreading far and wide.... Education is taking its root in the society. But those residing in the villages and far away hills, still follow the same old traditional customs. They are still in the same conditions as their forefathers were.... We living in cities and town never try to understand their wishes, their desires and their thoughts. We are simply becoming indifferent to this basic society. There is a wide gap between the literate and illiterate Nepalese and this gap is being widened day by day." The downtrodden and poor section of the society were never lost sight of by Rup Narayan. Rup said that the improvement of this basic society is most essential for bringing about social change.

Shekhar goes to Calcutta for further study. He visits Burma also. By the time he comes back from Burma he becomes quite

experienced and matured. He understands the human society and starts helping whoever is in need. He rescues a young widowed girl Bijaya from the hands of miscreants in Calcutta and thus becomes the centre of applause and honour.

While writing this Rup must have in his mind the fresh memory of the "Rajkumari Case" where Kharga Bahadur Bist chops off the head of a businessman for keeping 'Rajkumari' under him for illegal purposes. This case had aroused the emotions of the young Nepali boys every where and Bist had become their hero. It was but natural for Rup to include this incident in his novel and making Shekhar as brave, judicious and social as Kharga Bahadur Bist.

It was perhaps this incident that aroused the feeling of social reform in Rup Sinha and he started the movement of stopping Nepali women from going to the cinema which he thought was to be blamed for corrupting girls. It is said that he even had a brigade of young volunteers like N. L. Giri, Keshar Chhetri, Mani Kumar Chhetri and others who checked the public from different points from going to the Rink Cinema.

Besides Shekhar and Mohan—there are a few other male characters like Lalit Singh, father of Shekhar, Ranbir Singh, father of Bina, Tulsi Baje and Mr. Desai. Among these the characters of Shekhar and Mohan are most prominent.

The women characters of the novel are also laudable in the sense that each one lives according to the ideals of Indian womanhood. Bina, the heroine, is not only beautiful but very virtuous. She is a combination of "Laxmi and Sharda"—as the author puts it.

Rup compares Maya to 'Uma' who loves her old 'Shiva' with much care and devotion. She is brought up in the modern culture and civilization and has a good educational background. She is simple as a child but is as quick as 'lightning' and as pure as a 'raindrop' and free from any prejudice.

The other women characters are Maina Devi, Gauri Sharma and Bijaya. They have been given short roles, but each one is perfect in her own place.

Many critics of Rup Sinha are of the opinion that the author has projected himself in Shekhar. His aims and aspirations, his likes and dislikes are the same as those of Shekhar. We find that the author has chosen an appropriate title for the novel.

In his actual life we find that Rup was just like Shekhar except that he took law as his profession and Shekhar took to teaching.

Rup philosophises life and love and says in *Bhramar*, "Love is of two types, one receives and the other gives—the latter is the real love." He does not like wastage of money in pomp and the show of marriages. This money and wealth can be utilised in rendering help to the poor people and education to them. "We need young men and women who will live in and respect this society."

Rup wanted Nepali women to educate themselves. He visualised even having Nepali women lawyers as early as 1936. In *Bhramar* he speaks as Shekhar and tells Gauri—"From now on I will try my level best to teach you English and make you the first lady lawyer among the Nepalese." But till now, though quite a few Nepali ladies have passed the law examination but not a single one is seen practicing this profession. Rup's dream of seeing Nepali women lawyers remains unfulfilled. Rup writes that the responsibility of women in serving the society is not any less than the menfolk. Women as mothers, wives and sisters can do a great service by encouraging men to do good work for the society. Rup was aware of the shortcomings of present day education and writes that education does not mean that it should equip us with jobs only. This is a wrong and limited notion of education. Unless people stop thinking of education in this narrow sense, they cannot be properly educated. Though he loved English and the life style of the Englishmen, he used to say that such a life style does not suit our society. Free mixing with boys and girls can be tolerated only in the society of 'Kuire' (कुइरे), meaning having grey eyes.

As far as the language of *Bhramar* is concerned, it is superb. The patterning of the words has given a new style of expression to the Nepali language. In the entire description there is no monotony. Liveliness and interest is sustained throughout the story and this quality has reached its height in his second novel *Bijuli*, which he had started with a new vigour but could not complete owing to his sudden death. With his passing away, the Nepali people lost another precious jewel of Nepali literature.

Rup was a voracious reader and right from his school days he had a library of his own. He liked to read English, Bengali and Hindi books and his subjects of interest varied from stories,

novels to psychology and politics. Sometimes he was found in his room with books scattered all around him. Sarat and Bankim were his favourite Bengali authors. Though fond of this language he never liked Bengali songs. He used to comment sometimes—"Bengali songs make me sleep" or "If we play Bengali music at marriage ceremonies it will make us weep instead of being happy." He used to read Bengali fluently but he never liked writing in Bengali.

His wife Saraswati Sinha reports that he never used to make any notes. When he used to think he used to pace the room. If at all there was any need to consult law books, he used to do so in the early hours of the morning.

The fact that he loved and read Bengali language is evident from his writing where he has used profusely many Bengali words which are hardly used in every day spoken Nepali. The beauty of the Bengali language is reflected in Rup's language. Bengali words that are of Sanskrit in original, have been well accommodated in Nepali, and it has made Nepali language richer than what it was before. Words such as ईश्वर, ब्रह्माहता, लाघव, पूर्वकृत्य, हृदयकोटर, आप्यायित, बाधित, ताच्छिल्य, रतछिन्न, दारुण दुश्चिन्ता, विबुत, तुमुल, उच्चवाच्य, किंचित, विवर्ण, इतस्ततः which are not found in the Nepali vocabulary. Rup has very intelligently selected these little words to suit the Nepali language. The phrases used by him are both interesting and amusing. He was fond of pairing words and letters. He was excellent in starting all the words in a sentence with the same letter. Some examples of the former are quoted below: कुदिनका कुग्रह जस्तो, रमभेडा जस्तो रातो, पूर्वकृत्यको पछितो अखण्ड आधिपत्य, अतुल आत्मनिर्भरता, निर्जीव निकम्मा, etc. The use of these poetry like rhythm in prose is his speciality and for this Rup has earned the applause of many critics as the "Devkota" of Darjeeling.

Not only in *Bhramar* this style is evident even in his short stories and editorials. In *Bharati* he writes—"नेपाली भाव र भाषालाई नया जीवन दिनु परेको छ। भासमान बनाउनु परेको छ भाषालाई — भासन्त जस्तो मनोहर। Here the word starting with "भ" is to be noted. He continues ".....भिक्षापात्र होइन नेपाली भाषा। भास्वती हो हाम्रो भाषा। यो भाषा भीमक्रान्त हो। यसमा भीमनाद छ र भुवन विजयी बनाउनु परेको छ।.... भूगोलका सारा नेपालीको सहायता भारतीले किन न भेटाइला?" Using "श" he writes—शतधारामा बगोस हाम्रो साहित्यस्त्रोत। शतपत्र जस्तो होस हाम्रो नेपाली भाषा। शतपथिक जस्ता होऊन हाम्रा साहित्य सेवी। शब्द विन्यासले सुशोभित होस हाम्रो नेपाली भाषा। शब्द शक्तिले बनोस हाम्रो शब्दाम्बुधि।" Rup appears as an exceptional

writer by using this style of writing which was not used by his predecessors. Moreover no one has been able to imitate his style till today.

Chapter XI

His Short Stories

Rup's collection of short stories *Khatha Navaratna* came out in the year 1950. It consists of the following nine stories: "Pushparag", "Jimmawari Kasko", "Bigreka Bahun", "Biteka Kura", "Ama", "Dhanmati ko Cinema Swapna", "Mr. H. B. Basnet", "Bidhwasta Jiwan" and "Hatyakarini". The first seven stories were published in different Nepali magazines like *Sharda*, *Khoji*, *Bharati*, *Sahitya Srot* and *Gorkha*. He added in this book only the last two stories. It appears that after the first story "Annapurna" (1927) he wrote short stories again only after 1940.

"Pushparag" begins with an alliteration on the letter 'p'. He writes—पोखराजका पिता पुष्पजीवी। पिल्लिलाउँदो पिलम्बरे, पुवाले पगरी, पछ्यौरा र पटुका त्यसका परापूर्व देखिको पहिरन। Later while describing the environment he says—पुष्पमासको पहिलो घाममा, पुष्पाभरणा पोखराज पुष्पवाटिकामा पल्टेर के विचार गरिरहेका छ। पिपलका रूखमा पिपिराका जोडाले आजकल गैँड बनाउन छोडेका छन्। and again—पुष्पमणिले पोखराजको पुष्परेणु पान गरयो, प्यासो पुष्पकीटले झैँ। The entire story has the maximum number of words starting with 'p'. The readers' attention is attracted by this peculiar style.

The plot centres around the romance between Pushpamani, the son of a rich family and Pokhraj the daughter of their gardener. Pokhraj bears the child of Pushpamani. The parents cannot accept her because of her poor family background and of her father's lowly profession. They are sent to the plains by giving a large sum of money. Later when Pushpamani comes back from the army, after becoming an army officer and looks for Pokhraj he finds that she, along with her family have left for some unknown destination in the plains. He goes in search of them, and finds Pokhraj playing with their one year old son, but she refuses to tell him that it is his child. She tells him that the child's father is some one else. On hearing this, Pushpamani faints.

Rup's second story "Jimmawari Kasko" brings into focus another aspect of the Nepalese society. He has shown here that school-going girls are to be looked after well by the parents, otherwise they might make the mistake of choosing their life partners in a hurry.

In this story Padma the daughter of a rich father was about to be a victim of her youthful folly but due to the timely intervention of her brother Raghunath she is prevented from wandering freely with her friends. Raghunath knows the tricks of Padma who was quietly associating with young boys. Their parents though rich were not educated. Raghunath tells his mother, "Look mother, listen carefully. She (Padma) is only sixteen and goes to the cinema alone, and sends letters to boys of Govt. High School through younger brother and goes I do not know where, with Muna, the girl from the other house—Isn't this sheer nonsense and mischief of adolescence?" Later she is persuaded to marry a talented, well educated but poor boy Ratna Bahadur, who was working as a teacher. They had to do all the household work between them. Padma was not trained to do all such things. She used to depend on servants and others. Hence when she saw that she has to work a lot she leaves her husband's home and goes back to her own.

After nine months she comes back to her husband. She is about to give birth to a child. Her father-in-law shouts at her saying, "Who is going to take the responsibility of the child?" and asks his son to remove Padma from home. Ratna Bahadur does not obey his father and tells him, "The responsibility is yours, mine and the rich people of the society. It is the responsibility of the society which has the power of buying a good match for even a bad downcast girl with money, and innocent girls are made to be the wife of wicked sons. Why should we blame Padma? We have to blame the society, the parents of Padma, you and I."

Rup blames the affluent and upper middle class people for the evils it has wrought to the society. When evils become deep-rooted in society and ways and means to remove it becomes incomprehensible, people start philosophising about life. Rup is no exception. His philosophical conjectures towards life and society are seen through his writings, scattered in between his novel and short stories. He has seen the problems of society and the depth of baseness to which man can fall. By characterising

these social evils and carelessness of our society he desires to remove these parasites who are doing more harm than good, to the people. He cautions the public to guard against these vices. It appears from the writings that Rup had the extraordinary talent to feel and anticipate the difficulties of the society and wanted to give each one his due responsibility to serve the society.

In another story "Bigreko Bahun", Rup has shown how the caste system and untouchability has made us pompous and empty minded. We have become even cruel towards our own fellow beings. The story revolves around the young man, a Brahmin by caste, who helps an old lady belonging to a lower caste to cross a turbulent and swollen stream. Some people who have witnessed this act of charity not only talk about his audacity to touch an untouchable woman but the whole society boycotts him. But Rup finds in him the strength of a real hero, to be able to throw off the shackles of casteism and untouchability and write with his sarcasm and sincerity, that "Let God go on producing thousands of such spoilt Brahmins in our society." We have read before how Rup got this inspiration of writing this story from Surya Bikram Gewali.

Rup's stories began first to appear in *Khoji* in 1940 which was being published by G.D.N.S. under his own editorship. The leaders started to take so much interest in *Khoji* because of his writings that it soon became one of the most popular magazines. For those who could read it was no problem. But the illiterates, who could not read also started to take interest in *Khoji* and would make others read out to them. People found in Rup, not only a lawyer but a wonderful poet. His story "Dhanmati ko Cinema Swapna" had already made him a popular writer. Rup was successful in selecting the material and in making the society aware of our glaring social defects. Even today these stories are read with awe and enthusiasm.

In his story "Biteka Kura" (Things of the Past), a young married driver becomes infatuated with another girl who seems to be very clever and good natured. He sometimes makes us laugh with his realistic narration. The driver is explaining his own life. His first wife's name was Tara. Rup uses his special art of expression, making the narration rhythmical and very enjoyable—e.g. "पाँच वर्षको छोरो छ। आमाले दिएको नाम ध्रुवतारा। ताराको आपत्तिलाई पर सरेर मैले रखिदिएको नाम जलधारा। ध्रुवतारा र जलधारा, दुवै हाम्रा प्राणका प्यारा, आँखाका तारा। यी दुइलाई पालन. पोषण गर्दै सुखसित बगिरहन्छ, हामी

दुइको जीवन धरा।” Expressing his love for his wife he says that he does not want anything from God except his love for and from Tara. His idea is the general ideology of the then youths of Darjeeling—nay of the majority of the young boys. He speaks through the hero of the story—“My God! I do not require anything. I am satisfied if I only have my Tara, my son and my daughter and four motor vehicles.” Rup probably had in his mind the Nepalese of his district who have only this sort of aim. They are not bothered about anything else other than their own survival.

Rup’s dialogues are always sharp and crisp. It is evident in several places in his narration. He writes—“The young girl looked at me intently—like an expert examining precious stones”, and another place he says—“Will you marry me?—these words came out of my mouth just like a bullet which goes out accidentally when one is playing with a gun, and he comes to his senses after hearing the sound—so was I startled, when the meaning of what I said sank into me.” This comparison of the condition of a man in love and the one who is playing with a gun makes us go into splits. Rup had many such experiences in his own life. He had plenty of material all around him. He writes that it was war-time and the owners of motor vehicles had earned quite a lot of money. Most of the Nepalese at that time were serving in the tea estates and were very poor. A few exceptional ones had become rich by owning cars and using them as transport.

The hero of the story, the driver, is also quite rich. He takes pride in calling himself the owner of the car. He loves to dress well and is conscious of his physical smartness. The boy meets the girl—as usual, but Rup’s arguments are very unusual. These two plan to go to Burma after transferring their property in the name of his children. But the girl very cleverly makes him understand her past life—that she was already a kept wife of a tea planter who had now married a lady of his own nationality. After hearing this the driver becomes more determined to take her away, but the girl says—“Whatever happened is now already past. Therefore the sooner we forget, it will be better because the past makes our coming future very unpleasant.”—The story ends here, but through it Rup has immortalised not only himself but the whole of Nepali society of that time. Rup gathered experiences of men and subjects in and around

Darjeeling depicted them in his stories.

In "Mother", Rup has remarkably depicted the rise of politics, mainly Communism, in Darjeeling. In a backward place like it, to imagine political consciousness and maturity among the people was a pipe dream. But Rup discovers Amar who was the only son of a widow and makes him a comrade. Amar and his mother used to earn their livelihood from a small shop at the Chowkbazar. Amar and Nayanantara had passed school final examination in the same year. Nayanantara is the only daughter of a rich doctor in Darjeeling and she had gone to Calcutta for higher study. Amar was also studying in a local college. Nayanantara makes Amar a Communist and he starts spending most of his time with his comrades without looking after his mother. There are papers, magazines in the Communist office. The comrades meet often. Lectures are given by Comrade Kulbir and their contributions are given to their leader Lalmani. Amar and Nayanantara get married but they hardly stay at home. The mother has to look after everything. One day Amar is put into jail and in the meanwhile Nayanantara elopes with another man. Amar goes on asking about Nayanantara and at last when Amar is set free he embraces his mother but she, not able to give an answer to his question. "Where is Nayanantara?" faints and dies just outside the jail.

Rup has given us a rough idea of what Communism meant at that time and how people felt about it. The characters in the story are real persons who were active in politics at that time. Almost all the readers including even the great Communist leader Ratanlal Brahmin, accept that Comrade Lalmani is no other than Ratanlal "Baje" himself. Rup had simply changed the name. Instead of Ratan—he had used 'Mani' and if Ratanlal is read backwards it comes to the Lal. Hastabir was another politician of that time. The first word Hasta means hand. Rup used another term for hand, i.e. 'Kar'. So Hastabir became 'Karbir'. In the same way Nayanantara and others were also taken from real life characters.

Critics may look at this story in their own way regarding Rup's idea about Communism but no one can deny that Rup has reflected the then social picture in all his stories. The birth and growth of Communism, the gradual decay of casteism, the economic and social milieu, all can be discerned through the different characters of his stories. The proud and boastful

character of H. B. Basnet, his love of using English in between speaking Nepali, his cleverness, makes everyone feel bored of him. The author writes that he is a simple poor teacher and "He plays with chalks only". He is a victim of "arthritis" and when Mr. Basnet shakes hands with him in English style he becomes almost senseless due to pain. Mr. Basnet has a silver-headed stick in his hand and goes to have tea and attends dances at 'Plivas'.

Rup compares himself with Mr. Basnet. He writes,—“I am a graduate with a B.T. degree and just a negligible school master earning Rs. 90/- only. With this ninety rupees I have to make both ends meet, and this Basnet—who always failed, is now so well off. The clothes he had on cost more than ninety rupees.

Mr. Basnet was wearing white flannel trousers, tennis shoes, black blazers and had a tennis racquet in his hand. He was using a white silk handkerchief to blow his nose. He says to Rup—“Mr. R.N. why are you working as a teacher without taking other jobs? School master! oh! rubbish!—Rup is shocked at this remark and stares at him.”

The description that Rup has given presents Mr. Basnet as a very cunning and shrewd person. He invites Rup to Hotel Everest and introduces Miss Daisy, a Jewish lady as his friend. Both of them trap Rup easily and make him buy shares in their glassware business. In their company Rup feels as if “he is walking in a dream” and when Daisy takes him in another room “he goes like a lamb taken to the altar of sacrifice.” Daisy tells him, “Your friend is a wonderful person... Day and night he thinks of nothing else other than his business. I used to think that the Nepalese are good in using ‘Khukuris’ only but your friend Mr. Basnet—he seems to surpass even the Marwaris and Jews in business.” When Rup listens to Daisy—“he becomes like a snake who listens to the music of a snake charmer.”

A day comes when both Daisy and Basnet get arrested for forgery. Rup imagines—“He saw a heap of multicoloured glass—broken into pieces on the floor.”—Basnet is sent to jail for eighteen months. By chance, R.N. is appointed as the jail visitor and goes to see Mr. Basnet. Even there Basnet looks at him like a ‘victorious king who looks at a defeated king’... Rup feels as if he is the prisoner and Basnet the visitor. Later Basnet is removed from Darjeeling jail to another jail. Rup

feels that it is better to be a teacher than to be cunning and shrewd like Mr. Basnet.

This story is again based on actual experience. While narrating the story he says that he and Mr. Basnet were class friends and went to Calcutta for further studies. After graduation he sought a job but as he could not get any he went to do his B.T. Everything he has explained seems to be his own story except that instead of B.T. he did his B.L.

The story of "Bidhwasta Jiyan" (Destroyed Life) is about the life of a young girl who is staying alone in a big hotel in Puri with her small son. She has only one hand, the other was amputated because of the bullet wounds she received from her own husband who had come on leave from the service and on seeing her with another man he shoots her, though she is innocent.

The Puri beach, the child's antics and the words he mouths, the hotel scene, his conversation with the girl are so natural and interesting that one cannot help but appreciate Rup's style and the standard of his expression.

"Hatyakarini" (Murderer) is Rup's ninth and last story, where he has selected a different kind of plot. Here we find Rup as a lawyer who had gone to Calcutta and given a case by his friend, Mr. Bose who was not able to find the reason behind the murder. Man Kumari has murdered a man who had come into her life when her husband was fighting a war far away in Tunisia.

Man Kumari was a talented dancer and on one of her tours she had come across this man. His regular visits, his eagerness to help her makes Man Kumari develop a soft corner towards him. However, in the weakness of the moment, she becomes the victim of his lust but soon after she starts to repent. She leaves Calcutta and goes to Dehradun to stay with her parents. Her husband comes back and they return to Calcutta. They lead a peaceful life but she cannot disclose the truth to her husband lest it would spoil their relationship. Suddenly one day this man appears at her house when she is alone. She implores him to leave but he does not and tries to take her in his arms. She kills him. Rup has succeeded beautifully in bringing out the reason behind this murder.

The verdict of the case is not given in the story but once we know the reason there is no difficulty in understanding that the accused is acquitted.

No doubt if Rup had lived for another 10 or 15 years Nepali literature would have been further enriched. We would have got more such stories derived from actual case histories.

Each of the nine stories of Rup surpass one another in brilliance and of narration and presentation. His story telling capacity is evident in fact from his very first story "Dhanmati ko Cinema Swapna". They give a true picture of the Nepali society at that time. If Rup had written these stories out of his imagination only, it would not have perhaps affected the readers. But Rup never made the mistake of leaving out the plain truth. It was because of this adherence to real life experiences and truth that Rup became a successful writer. The richness and strength of his language is also based upon his vast knowledge of different languages.

Chapter XII

After Death

Soon after his death, a special issue on Rup Sinha was published in *Bharati**. This issue gives us an idea about how people from various walks of life felt about Rup. The contributors in this issue included several important writers, critics, budding young writers, as well as poets.

R.K. Sharma 'leading critic and writer in *Gorkha*' remarked — "The writings of Rup Narayan is a history of Nepali society of Darjeeling. Rup Narayan is not only a literary artist but he is our Social Historian too. In 1982, the same critic, matured in age and experience and wrote in "Darjeeling Khetrama Nepali Sahitya ko Prishta Bhumi ra Janma" — that Rup Narayan is in a reality the first real contributor to Nepal literature who is over and above a pure product of Darjeeling. Comparing him with other important literary figures of that time and giving a social background of Darjeeling. He argues: "The social condition of the Nepalese till independence was very poor and pathetic. Very few worked in the different offices including police, forest and the collectorates. There was not a single Nepali Headmaster in the district schools, nor were there police superintendent or S.D.Os. There were a few lawyers, two or three well established businessman, five or seven contractors. In short, most of them had reached only the lower middle class rung.... In such a state of a society, it is not easy to expect the birth and development of literature among the people without riches, without education. The Nepali society of Darjeeling during the 1900 was neither able to understand Nepali as a language nor able to give birth to Nepali literature.

Later Pandit Dharnidhar Sharma and Surya Bikram Gewali came to Darjeeling round about 1920-23 and started

* (Died on 15th April, '86).

** January-February 1955.

teaching in Government High School. The Nepali Sahitya Sammelan was founded at the initiation of Shri Gewali in 1924, when these three important persons were active, spreading education and doing literary work, Rup was only a lad of about 14 or 15 years. It was only after 1933 when he became a graduate and a lawyer that Rup started his literary career. His first attempt to write a novel, which he finished and published in 1936 was the first successful novel ever written in Nepali. In this novel there was no aim like that of Dharnidhar Sharma to preach. No one till then had written a novel of such calibre even in Nepal. It became the foremost novel in the whole of Nepali literature. Rup proved that he was able to create artistic literature of the highest quality in his own style and refined language. Therefore, Darjeeling received more important contributions from Rup than P. M. Pradhan and Dharnidhar.... From this point of view Rup can be easily placed in the first position as a true litterateur of Darjeeling.

The late poet Shri Agam Singh Giri while giving his review on the creative genius of Rup writes in *Bharati*, "Though Rup loved and was devoted to Nepali literature from his childhood we cannot find any of his writings published before 1930. This does not mean that he never wrote before this. It may be that due to the death of papers and magazines his writings could not be published. Therefore we will discuss his stories, poems and essays which were published in different magazines or came out in the form of books between 1930 and 1951.... Rup Narayan's first writing was published in the third issue of *Adarsha*, a monthly magazine, that used to come from Kalimpong, under the editorship of Shesmani Pradhan, in the year 1930. Sinha's literary essay on 'Novel and stories' was published in this issue.... our heart beats with pride when we see Rup Narayan's refined and well developed language used in his writings.... and the notion of "The Nepali society is all going to be Christians", appears totally meaningless.... A few lines are quoted from his essay.... 'There is a great deal of similarity between a story and a novel. Both are the flowering buds of the same stem. Both have the same purpose. Both aim at beautifying the garden of literature, by expressing and developing the same ideal. If we review critically the novel and stories, we do not find any difference, both flow together in the same stream and both are bound by the same string.'

Rup's creative writings appeared in different issues of *Nepali Sahitya Sammelan Patrike*. His articles relating to 'The usefulness of the novel and stories in literature', '(1st. issue 2nd year) 'The place of literature in national life' (1st. issue 4th. year), 'Short life story of Lt. Gobhardhan Gurung, Sardar Bahadur A.D.C., Governor of W.B.', and 'We and our language', (1st. issue 6th year), were published in different issues of this Patrika. Shri Padmaprasad Pradhan was the then editor of this journal. One of Rup's best essays is 'Thunuwa Kavi' or the 'Imprisoned Poet'. It came out in the *Bhanubhakta Smarak Grantha* published in 1940 under the editorship of Shri Surya Bikram Gewali."

The poet Agam Singh Giri who died young (1927-1973) was one of the most forceful romantic poets of Nepali literature. He had a strong desire to see all the writings of Rup Narayan Sinha appear in one book. Talking about the great damage that is being done by novels of bad taste and appreciating the novel *Bhramar* of Rup Sinha poet Agam writes in *Bharati*—"The attractive style and effective language, the interesting and inquisitive subject matter have struck its deep roots in the minds of all Nepali readers.... He offered his short life in the devoted service of Nepali literature that worked not only like brick and mortar but served as a pillar to build the temple of Nepali literature."

In 1953, young writers of Darjeeling, Neelam Pradhan, Bir Bikram Gurung and poet Giri once organised a study circle to discuss the 'Nepali Story' under the presidentship of Rup Narayan Sinha. The group expressed its heartfelt sorrow over the literary silence of Shri R. N. Sinha and requested him to finish the novel *Bijuli*. Poet Giri writes — "He smiled at our request. This was a smile not of indifference but of gratefulness towards those young writers and he was determined to finish *Bijuli*."

As he could not ignore the request of these young boys Rup took back home the old files of *Bijuli* from Mani Press after a few days. It is reported that he wrote the third part of the second chapter where he has beautifully depicted the romantic scene of the court. He could not finish the other parts as he was pre-occupied with other works. He wanted to take a break from his personal life and activity in Darjeeling for some time, go to some quiet place far away from Darjeeling and then finish *Bijuli* within two or three months. This was expressed by him to some of his relatives too but before he could realise his dreams, death snatched him away. His death

was a blow to the hearts of many young writer who expected so much from him.

Rup used to be rarely seen in Nepali clothes but when Maharaj Kumar of Nepal Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev visited Darjeeling on 14 April 1951, Rup greeted him to the delight of all, wearing the Nepali 'Daura Suruwal'. But he never believed that one can be Nepali only by wearing Nepali dress. He believed that only true 'Spirit' can keep the security of Nepali people.

R. K. Sharma, writes about him, "In this smartness we can compare Rup with Oscar Wilde. This smartness was never lost till his death. Oscar Wilde also had a strong desire not to grow old. It was because of this wish that the world received a book like *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Just as he had written so many controversial books, I had also expected the same from Rup. But my wish remained unfulfilled. Our Nepali society is unfortunate.... Accha Rai 'Rasik', Narendra Prasad Kumar have a great influence in our Nepali literature. I have seen many of my Bengalee brothers reading *Gorkha* asking who is 'Rasik'? These budding writers unnecessarily die early. Our society is like this. This loss, due to the death of R. N. Sinha was to be filled up by our young writers.... We find two styles of writings in Nepali language. In Nepal they use many Hindi words like 'Larka' but Rup is praiseworthy in this sense that inspite of his mixed environment he could give us such a pure book like *Bhramar*.

Speaking from the Chair at Rup's condolence meeting held on 13 February, 1955 at G.D.N.S. Hall, Smt. Deo Kumari Sinha the well known Nepali writer remarked, "Mr. Sinha will cross the limits of his Nepali literature and will go to make friends with literature of other languages. I need not repeat that his writings will occupy a unique place in world literature.... *Bhramar* is a novel of high standard. The characterisation is lively and the style unique. The character of Maya is unparalleled. In Bina we get the 'Sanathani' ideal of womanhood. As his novel is idealistic, so are his stories, psychological and realistic. To speak the truth Shri Sinha has become most successful in touching the core and expressing the conflicting emotions of a women's heart. The love and compassions, the pride and vanity of a woman has been successfully characterised.... in Sinha we get the simplicity of Turgenev and the heart catching quality of Sarat Babu.... He has not borrowed from any one his style and thought. Only Sinha, with such a free personality, could create a character like that of Indrashekhar in

Bhramar. It was possible only by him to create a character, who can break the shackles of the society and be indifferent to the praise and criticism of the society. He is one who can sacrifice a lot after knowing that he had committed a mistake.... Rup was constantly serving the Nepali language in some way or the other in spite of his busy schedule at the court and snatching some moment even during his busiest hours of court cases. Besides stories and novel all his editorials and articles published in different magazines are worthy of preservation. His service to literature will give inspiration to the future generation.... it will take time to make up the loss that has been incurred, due to his death. He was well respected during his life time. Let this respect grow and multiply in the years to come.

Bir Bikram Gurung writes of him, "He was progressive in his style of writing. His wishes are not many but he was interested more in quality than in quantity.... he was an out and out romantic. I quote, Shri R. K. Sharma — "He was a pure Nepali product.... The psychological causes of the weaknesses and the defects pointed out by Pundit Dharnidhar Sharma were elaborated by Rup. Sinha.... He became very dear to Nepali and other societies because of this romantic quality in him."

Poet Agam Singh Giri says of him, "We criticise much the personal life of Rup Sinha. It is accepted by all that Sinha had a free nature. He had a peculiar personality. This peculiarity can be seen through any angle. But it looks very strange when we find him confined to himself with these peculiarities. His social and literary life was completely different — there was no personal contradiction. We cannot forget Sinha because he has given us 'Satyam, Sivam and Sundaram' in Nepali literature. If we look at the personal lives of great writers of the world then we have to boycott even Mahatma Gandhi, Shakespeare, Maxim Gorky, philosopher Russel and Maupassant. But because of their writings, these great people are still alive in our memory. In the same way the future literary world will look with respect at this Nepali Maupassant of ours — Shri R. N. Sinha."

Another Nepali critic Shri Taranath Sharma writes, there is attraction, magic and sweetness in his style.... There is art in his selection of words.... there is literature in his language but there is no complexity. There is much labour seen in connecting the words in sentences but there is no unnaturalness. He has overthrown even the so-called giant writers of Nepal in his style. In fact, he has

earned himself the title of the "King" in this style of story writing.

He has written only a few short stories but whatever he has written are all realistic. There is sarcasm towards the artificial rules of the society, there is realistic description of poverty. In some stories he has condemned the bad taste and attitudes of the rich people and in others he has protested against the pomp and show of these people.

A critical and comparative analysis of R. N. Sinha as a story writer appeared in *Sainik Samachar* (31 December, 1976). He writes that Rup has already established a strong foothold in the sphere of novels. *Bhramar* has laid the foundation of the modern Nepali novel. There is not a single imaginary and unbelievable incident in *Bhramar* as in *Birsikka*. It is based on down to earth matters. It is not limited within the traditional society like that of Rudra Raj Pandey.... Though we cannot place him as the founder of the modern story (in Nepalese) still he can safely be regarded as the main contributor in the history of story writing.... as Guru Prasad Mainali was familiar with the 'village life so also R. N. Sinha was familiar with the Nepali life outside Nepal.... his story 'Bite ka Kurta' shows the pathos of a young girl which can be compared with Bhawani Bhikku's — 'Aba ma tyas pasal ma cigarette kindina'. Social values, culture and principles do not change quickly with the passing of time. His faith on these values has been seen in his stories like 'Jimmawari Kasko' and 'Puspa Rag'. The psychological picture of the uneducated Nepalese from the lower strata of society is seen in the story 'Dhanmati ko Cinema Swapna'. The incidents depicted in 'Bidhwasta Jiwan' are taken from common every day happenings. Those who disagree with the political sarcasm shown in the story 'Ama' will not fail to admire the realistic depiction of the then society.... the male characters in coming out of the darkness of ignorance and illiteracy, some being forced to forget their deep love towards their motherland and relatives, sent to the war front or tea-gardens out of desperation, some just running after money and artificial pleasures.... The plight of the women who are illiterates but dying for love and sympathy, the false vanity of some of these women are all real life cameos. The beauty of his stories has been doubled by the influence of his novelistic approach.... Though Rup was educated in the western style and loved to lead a western way of life, he had a strong faith in his own

culture and civilisation. This is shown in his stories 'Mr. H. B. Basnet', 'Jimmawari Kasko' and 'Ama'.... His characters are progressive in their outlook than those of Mainali's. He was influenced by English and French writers. He blossomed as a writer in Bengal and was inspired by famous Bengali writers. We can see the poetic lucidity in his prose like that of Laxmi Prasad Devkota. If we call *Laxmi Nibandh Sangrah*, a prose in lyric form then we can call *Bhramar* as lyric in prose. Because of this commonness between these two, Rup may be called the 'Devkota of Darjeeling'. Rup has never been drawn away by the flow of imagination like Devkota. He is original in his style and there is no artificiality in the use of words and in description. His use of phonetics in his rhetoric style of writing is his another speciality.... There is yet to be born a writer in the Nepali literature who can compete with Rup Narayan Sinha."

Basudeo Tripathi of Tribhuvan University in his book *Bicharan* writes, "Rup is the Devkota of Darjeeling. *Bhramar* is not only a successful novel but it is also invincible. It is proud of not only of its historical significance but there is no second person to compete in its artistic purity. There are two subject matters in *Bhramar*, love and socialism. The rest is an outcome of day dreaming". However Dr. Tripathi accepts the fact that it is one of the most brilliant and popular novel in Nepali.

Justice R. K. Sharma while commenting on Rup, in one of his unpublished works, writes: "R. N. Sinha published some of his stories... some of the characters of these stories were with some disguise, taken partly from real life." He remembers his days with R. N. Sinha and reflects—"After we came together in 1948, we had occasional literary discussions. My name as writer had reached his ears by then. By that time I had already written what now have appeared in *Sapta Sharadiya* and some, which are now included in *Das Gorkha*. I asked him to write more short stories and promised to see them published without interference of any kind in *Gorkha* and *Sharada*. He agreed and wrote some short stories like "Ama" and others. In "Ama" he had introduced real life characters with some slight change. Lalmani is one such character. At my instance he changed the girl of the story from being a lawyer's daughter to a doctor's daughter because at that time there was a real life character of similar political persuasion in Darjeeling and her father was a physician. Be that as it may, I was able

to turn his creative genius to writing short stories again. Most of the characters of his short stories were real-life characters whom he could point out as his models. Even the Brahmin of *Bhramar* was a character from real life."

While writing short stories during his sojourn in Sepaidhura, one day, on his return from there he expressed his desire to write another novel, because in a discussion I had told him that the ending of *Bhramar* was weak. I had pointed out that the life of a teacher was after all not a life to be chosen as an ideal. It is only students who think of that life as something grand. He agreed and told me that when he wrote *Bhramar* he was not mature enough to know life. Anyway, he wanted to do better than that. Then I suggested that he enter a new field in the Nepali novel and write a novel with a female character in the lead. I pointed out that the famous English novelist W. M. Thackeray had done very well with his Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair*. He had not read that book but he liked my suggestion and asked how could he get a Nepali female character with a wide and varied experience of life. I said that the solution was not difficult if he chose his female character from WACI (Women's Auxiliary Corps, India). That was the time just after World War II. Mr. Parasmani Pradhan had recruited and sent hundreds of Nepali girls (including his own relations) as WACIs. Because of that many articles with adverse comments on Mr. Pradhan had appeared in the Benaras based *Udaya* edited by Mr. Kashi Bahadur Shrestha. Mr. Pradhan had already threatened some writers and Mr. Shrestha as well with D.I.B. cases and penalties, I was told. Be that again as it may, Mr. Sinha got interested in the suggestion and said with a WACI girl in the female lead any type of novel was possible. Then in order to equip himself he wanted material on WACIs. Out of curiosity and disgust towards the recruitment of innocent Nepali girls for military duty and military hazards in the service of white soldiers and masters, I had collected cuttings and clippings from papers wherein the hardship and woes of WACIs had appeared in English language newspapers and others. I had told him about those cuttings and clippings and had previously shown some of them to him. He asked for them. I personally handed them over to him. Thereafter, due to some doleful personal reason, I had to leave Darjeeling and go back home.

Later I learnt that Mr. Sinha wrote a novel. Whether and how much of that material he used from the clippings. I cannot say. After his death an announcement appeared, I think in *Bharati*, that Mr. Pradhan would publish Mr. Sinha's last novel. I also believe that one chapter of that novel under the title *Bijuli* appeared in *Bharati*.

In case Mr. Sinha made a WACI a heroine and wrote a novel using the material I had supplied, there must have been good cause for Mr. Pradhan not to publish that novel and suppress the same for ever. Then why only one chapter was published is a question which may arise. That chapter did not contain adverse material for one thing; for another probably without reading the whole novel that chapter was published. On reading further, the cause might have been found to suppress the novel.

Now these are my deductions. Nevertheless, I have one piece of material for support. Mr. Sinha asked for the cuttings in his own hand writing. Fortunately that chit was found preserved in one of my books.

This is all about my knowledge of his unpublished works. There could have been some more unpublished works but I doubt it. He was not a man to write and preserve it. If he had written it probably got lost. No one was there in his house to encourage his literary genius. Mostly he lived alone and books and papers used to lie littered all over his chamber and study. He must have lost many papers even from his briefs. He was not a man to garner, gather and preserve. He was an extravagant, extrovert, a spendthrift of his money, of his energy, of his talent, of his affection, of his love, of his bonhomie and of what not."

Mr. Sharma's free and frank opinion of Rup Sinha not only throws light on Rup's calibre but also shows how the writer himself was intimately interested in the development and upliftment of the Nepali language and literature.

Mr. Sharma further wrote, that he never found him brooding or bothered about either his own future or of the others. He wanted Nepali literature to grow and advance but again he did not burden himself with anxiety. He lived with the present and thought that the future would take care of itself. In fact Mr. Sharma wanted him to settle down and buy or build a house in the town but anxiety for the future was not just in him.

He did not like to preach and he liked to leave everyone to

his own genius, evil or good. He had good reason to take this attitude. His orthodox father put him in a Hindu hostel to prevent him from straying. But he turned out to be the most unorthodox cosmopolitan. We had once some discussion on this and he put the matter in an interesting way which showed that he had put some limit to his liberal views and unorthodoxy. All the same he never accepted preaching nor did he like to preach. His advice if any was to the individual not to the generation. The generation could gather his views from his writings."

M. M. Gurung, an expert in Nepali culture — says about Rup Sinha — "When I was working as a teacher (1944-50) I had come to know about Mr. Sinha but personally I was not so close to him. He was even shorter than myself, always smart and walking confidently. Many had seen Mr. and Mrs. Sinha in the races and social functions. There were very few educated people in the middle class families at that time. It will not be a mistake if we say that Rup's family was one of the most cultured families at that time. Many times Rup was seen dancing with tall English ladies. I had the chance of listening to his literary and political lectures too. People used to assemble in crowds to listen to his political lectures — but he could not become a successful politician because he had no mass following. Most of his time was spent in his legal profession and the evenings in enjoyment. From outside, his family looked just like an Anglicised family. Nepali society was not so advanced at that time and equality was not to be seen during the regime of the British people. However, even in that atmosphere, dressed like an European and speaking their language, he used to compete with them. In this sense he can surely be called a courageous person having a strong personality. It may be a paradox that a person who liked Western culture and life, has given such a precious contribution to Nepali literature.... *Bhramar* seems to me as fresh as it was read 40 year before. The characters talk and walk before us. We see them with our eyes and they joys and sorrows influence us. A great book is created directly through life. Literature is a record of our experience, which is expressed through language. We feel that the writer has written about his own life. His unfulfilled wishes have been all satisfied in the stories. There is a happy ending in the novel. But perhaps, his last days were not spent

in that way. He was all alone and with a lonely heart he went away from this world."

"His language has presented a challenge to the court language of Nepal, and it has proved that even Darjeeling which was 'going to be all Christian' could also produce a writer like Rup Sinha. At that time we were just beginning to write.... and we used to be dumb-founded by looking at the use of beautiful language by him. His ideas and emotions regarding women are very high as seen in the editorials of *Bharati*. He has written that the greatness and glory of a society depends on the respect that it shows to its womenfolk.... but we doubt whether this was his true feeling or just an emotional outburst. The truth that he discovered at the end of his life is known to no one".

Recalling an incident just one day before the death of R. N. Sinha, Shri Gurudas Banerjee, an employee of the collectorate recollects: "I remember the day, just before he died he was in my office warming himself at the fireplace. I told him that I never found him warming himself before. He never even used a warm coat during the winter months. But that day was an exception. I remarked, 'What is the matter Rup Narayan Babu? I thought you would never become old. It is amazing that you are feeling cold like an old man....'"

He replied, "Gurudas Babu, I am really old now. A day may come when you will hear that I am no more in this world.... We are like a handful of ashes of this chimney. Although my life is earnest and my ambition sublime.... it has got its limit and I have reached that stage. This body is perishable. As such you would not be astonished if I die today or tomorrow."

We did not know that he was spitting blood due to a liver abscess. After about fifteen minutes he left the court leaving aside his work, requesting that another colleague (late Ganeshlal Subba) to take up cases on his behalf.

It was January and Darjeeling was very cold. Next day I heard that Rup was no more. I went and saw him in his eternal sleep. His words came to be true".

Appendix A

'Air Hostess Befooled'

Rup was kind and brilliant. He was full of wit and humour. One interesting incident is reported by Parsu Ram Roka, a well known story writer and a relative of Rup. The caption he had given for his narration was 'Air Hostess Befooled'.

"Once I was travelling with Mr. Sinha in a plane from Bagdogra to Calcutta. Soon after the plane took off Sinha wanted to quench his thirst by drinking the remaining one-fourth quantity of the wine in a half pint bottle which he took out from his brief case. Seeing this, the air hostess hurried towards Sinha and told him that it was not permissible to drink in the plane. Quoting some fictitious law and its amendments he told the air hostess that it was perfectly permissible to drink on flight. The air hostess was puzzled. Sinha told her to go to the cockpit and ask the pilot who must be knowing of the latest amendments. No sooner had she proceeded towards the cockpit, Sinha opened the bottle and finished the contents. On her return to Sinha, the air hostess was told to the amusement of the fellow passengers, "Gentle Lady, if the law is not amended yet, it is going to be amended soon."

Never afraid of anybody or of any situation, Rup Sinha lived a life of 51 years. He did not live long to manifest the potentiality that he was endowed with. Even though his contribution is meagre — one novel, another incomplete novel, one collection of nine stories, three poems and a few editorials — his name has become immortal in Nepali literature.

Appendix B

Mrs. Lucy Sinha's Letter

I was married to Mr. Sinha in December, 1933 and lived with him till July 1950 at which time we parted the best of friends. We always agreed that if we could not be happy together, then it was best to live separately.

During the 16 years or so that we were together we had our ups and downs, sometimes deliriously happy, sometimes hating each other.

Both of us were passionately fond of books and that was what just drew us together. We did not mind even if we starved as long as we could buy a new book. One instance of our improvident ways was the day our child was born. The evening before the two of us had gone out and browsed in a book shop at the Chowrasta for hours and bought two volumes of *French Revolution* which left us penniless. Midnight found me in pains for premature labour and early morning my child was born and we had nothing in the house till the banks opened and some client's long forgotten cheque was encashed.

Yes, we loved each other very much and I had no eyes for anyone else except my erratic husband. While he, as all men, had a glad eye for pretty faces. When I was upset about his ways he always used to quote "Senora I love you in my own fashion."

His carefree and careless ways used to nearly drive the entire household crazy. We had living with us his youngest sister, who died when she was 18 years, his youngest brother, the late Lt. Col. S. J. Sinha, his three daughters from his previous marriage and sometimes his brother's daughter and another of my other sister-in-laws.

Every morning all of us had to hunt madly for his court papers, glasses, clothes, which he always mislaid, this was while trying to persuade him to eat his breakfast. At last he would leave for the court after his clients coming several times with a taxi to fetch him.

By this time the house used to look as though a whirlwind had passed through it. He never bothered about meals nor ate at home except when he brought some friends of his home. He never came home till very late. If ever he had to come home to change for a meeting, he used to be in such a hurry that he practically walked in from one door and out the other, strewing his things as he went.

He never sat down in the evenings pouring over law books like other lawyers. I don't know how he ever managed to win cases. It was the same with his public speeches. He never bothered to write them down. If he wrote an outline it was lost long before he reached his destination. At first it used to frighten me wondering what he would say but soon I was quite confident he would hold his public.

He was profoundly interested in politics and one of his best friends to talk politics with him was his barber. The man was well versed in politics and the two of them used to enjoy themselves. I have not been interested in politics and to this day I don't know a thing about it.

His first book *Brahmar* (sorry, I don't know how to spell it) really was born in travail. How he used to write a chapter then throw it aside for so long and I'd ask 'What about your story?' and he used to say 'Oh bother books! lets have some fun instead, life is short and I want to live it to the full'. He always said 'I want a short and sweet life.' I suppose his wishes were granted.

Writing and losing what he had written — at long last it was done and published.

He gave me a copy and since I did not know how to read Nepali he wrote some translations of the dedication etc. in English for me. Sad to say somehow somebody had borrowed my copy and never returned it.

He wrote some poems and had started another book but I was not there when it was through. I asked him several times to please write in English so I too could enjoy it but he said he could not attain to the heights that English writing required.

I used to often tell him about some interesting articles from magazines (women's, I had read so that he could translate them for the Nepali newspaper *Khoji*).

He was always sincere about the welfare of his people and tried his best for their upliftment.

I do not remember much now about his many friends but one person stands out as a dear friend — Mr. H. M. Rai who was the market superintendent. He was a good Christian and always tried

to advise Mr. Sinha to be sober and careful. Mr. Sinha used to tease him and make fun of all his efforts.

I think he admired Mrs. Helen of Kurseong as a lady politician, of course I wouldn't know as my interest did not see it that way....

I think Mr. Sinha's photographic mind was his undoing. If he read a thing once he never forgot and knew exactly where to find it, in which book. If he was like any normal lawyer we could have had a father and husband at home every evening to share our meals and make us happy.

The condition of my child who was suffering from cerebral palsy, had a sobering effect on me. We had tried every conceivable thing but to no avail till a friend in Calcutta asked me to take my daughter to Calcutta, where miracles of healing were being performed by a Christian Sadhu. Both of us went rushing to Calcutta and attended several meetings with the miracle healer. With great difficulty we used to attend these prayer meetings and after a few meetings our daughter could actually walk back to her seat. Mr. Sinha returned to Darjeeling quite content with and my daughter and I stayed back to attend a few more meetings.

The Lord partially healed my child but what was important he touched and healed our hearts and we were baptised here. When we returned to Darjeeling and told Mr. Sinha what we had done he did not mind as he was not interested in religion. What disturbed him was our changed attitude to life. I had no more interest in going to parties. He was mad at this, he wanted us to be normal Christians and to hide the fact from all. This was impossible for us to do, we had to witness about God's doings and proclaim our second birth. This was December 1947.

Then the parting of our ways began till it ended in 1950.

His character in nutshell is he was kind, brilliant, impatient and full of life.

Sd/-
Lucy Sinha
Calcutta 22.9.80

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